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MŌRĀN 'ETHŌ

23

APHRAHAT DEMONSTRATIONS I

Translated from Syriac and Introduced by

KURIAKOSE VALAVANOLICKAL



ST. EPHREM ECUMENICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SEERI)
BAKER HILL, KOTTAYAM - 686 001
INDIA

2005

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Mōrān 'Eth'ō – 23

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Baker Hill, Kottayam 686 001, Kerala, India

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PREFACE

The aim of this translation is to make available the complete works of Aphrahat to a wider audience who cannot read and understand the works in their original language. The first volume of the works of Aphrahat was published five years ago by HIRS Publications, Changanassery, India. This volume received wide acceptance from the audience. Now I am bringing out the second edition of the first volume together with the second volume of the Demonstrations.

I would like to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Dr Sebastian P. Brock, the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford. In spite of his busy academic engagements he was happy to read the draft of this translation and to provide corrections and suggestions for improvements. It was due to his critical and perceptive reading, competent and scholarly direction, and never-failing availability, I bring this translation to a finish. The discussions which I made with him helped me to understand many of the obscure and difficult passages of the Demonstrations and the intricacies of Aphrahat's style. It was a special pleasure to work again in collaboration with him, whose support and help I still cherish, which I enjoyed when I was a student at the University of Oxford under his supervision. It was he who directed me to penetrate into the treasures of Syriac literature.

It is my pleasant duty to express gratitude to Reverend Dr Jacob Thekeparampil, the director of SEERI for accepting this project into the Mōrān 'Eth'ō Series. Finally, I am grateful to my colleagues and students at SEERI for the support they gave me in many ways.

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FOREWORD

Aphrahat's 23 Discourses on various aspects of Christian living, entitled 'Demonstrations', constitute the earliest major work of Syriac literature to survive. Aphrahat was writing between the years AD 337 and 345 in the Persian Empire (covering what is today approximately Iraq and Iran). Whereas most early Christian writings belong to the Greek and Latin cultural world, Aphrahat's Demonstrations, along with the poetry and prose works of his younger contemporary, St Ephrem (died 373), serve as the prime witnesses to the distinctive form of early Christian tradition in Western Asia as it developed among the Aramaic-speaking Christian communities, living to the East of the river Euphrates, who had adopted Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) as their literary language.

Although complete translations of all 23 Demonstrations into Latin, German and French, have been available, readers of English have hitherto only had access to translations of various individual Demonstrations which in any case are for the most part not particularly easy of access. Dr Kuriakose Valavanolickal has thus rendered a real service in producing the first complete English translation of Aphrahat's works, and it is particularly appropriate that these Demonstrations, which are the earliest piece of Christian literature written outside the bounds of the Roman Empire, should be published in India, rather than in Europe or America.

Dr Kuriakose Valavanolickal is particularly well qualified for the task of translating Aphrahat, for he holds the degrees of Master of Studies in Syriac Studies and of Doctor of Philosophy from Oxford University, his doctoral dissertation having been a study of the interpretation of the Gospel parables in the writings of both Aphrahat and Ephrem (this useful work was subsequently published in Germany in 1996, as volume 2 in the series *Studies in the Religion and History of Early Christianity*).

Dr Sebastian Brock
The Oriental Institute
Oxford University, Great Britain

ABBREVIATIONS

Abr. Kid.	Hymns on Abraham Kidunaya
AEPHE. SR	Annuaire. École pratique des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses
Aphr.	Aphrahat
ATR	Anglican Theological Review
Azym.	Hymns on Unleavened Bread
BK	Bedi Kartlisa
BdK	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter
BPMS	Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia Series
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
C	Curetonian Manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels [F. C. Burkitt (ed. and tr.), <i>Evangelion da-Mepharreshe</i> I, (Cambridge, 1904)].
CBM	Chester Beatty Monographs
CDiat.	The Commentary on the Diatessaron
CE	The Catholic Encyclopedia
Cgen.	The Commentary on Genesis
CLR	Classical review
CO	Christian Orient
Cruc.	Hymns on the Crucifixion

CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CQR	Church quarterly review
D	Diatessaron; Gospel citations taken from L. Leloir (ed. and tr.), <i>Saint Éphrem: Commentaire de l'évangile concordant</i> , (Dublin, 1963, and Leuven, Paris, 1990).
Dem. (s)	Demonstration (s)
DHGE	Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastique
DIP	Dizionario dei Istituti di Perfezione
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Symposium
DSp.	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique
Eccl.	Hymns on the Church
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
Ep. Pub.	Letter to Publius
Epiph.	Hymns on the Epiphany
Fid.	Hymns on Faith
FF	Fofo
GOFS	Göttinger Orientforschung, Reihe I: Syriaca
H. Arm.	Hymns preserved in Armenian
Haer.	Hymns against Heresies
HJ	The Heythrop Journal
Hypat.	Discourse to Hypatius
Ieiun.	Hymns on the Fast
JE	The Jewish Encyclopedia

JES	Journal of ecumenical studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JSOR	Journal of the society of oriental research
JSSS	Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
Jul.	Hymns against Julian
Jul. Sab.	Hymns on Julian Saba
LM	Le Muséon
LNPNF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
M. M. God	<i>Memrā</i> on the Mother of God
M. Frag.	Fragmentary <i>Memre</i> from a Manuscript on Mount Sinai
M. Nic.	<i>Memre</i> on Nicomedia
M. c. Bard.	<i>Memrā</i> against Bardaisan
Nat.	Hymns on the Nativity
NCE	New Catholic Encyclopedia
NEB	The New Encyclopaedia Britannica
Nis.	Hymns on Nisibis
NTHT	Nederlands(che)e Theologisch tijdschrift
NTS	New Testament Studies
OBC	Orientalia Biblica et Christiana
OC	Oriens Christianus
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OKS	Ostkirchliche Studien

OrSyr	L'Orient Syrien
OS	Orientalische Studien
Overb.	J. Overbeck (ed.), <i>S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni Balaei Aliorumque Opera Selecta</i> , (Oxford, 1865).
P	Peshitta [G. H. Gwilliam (ed. and tr.), <i>Tetraeuangelium Sanctum</i> , (Oxford, 1901)].
Par.	Hymns on Paradise
PdO	Parole de L'Orient
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PS	Patrologia Syriaca I-II, [J. Parisot (ed. and tr.), <i>Aphraatis sapientis persae, Demonstrationes</i> , (Paris, 1894, 1907)].
Res.	Hymns on the Resurrection
RPTK	Realenzyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche
S	Sinaitic Manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels [A. S. Lewis (ed.), <i>The Old Syriac Gospels</i> , (London, 1910)].
SA	Studia Anselmiana
SBFLA	Studii biblici Franciscani liber annus
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
ScC	Scuola cattolica. Rivista di scienze religiose
Scr. Arm.	Scriptores Armeniaci
Scr. Syri	Scriptores Syri
SdF	<i>Memre</i> (<i>Sermones</i>) on Faith
SDN	<i>Memrā</i> (<i>Sermo</i>) on Our Lord

SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SKS	Sächsisches Kirchen und Schulblatt
SM	Studia missionalia
SP	Studia Patristica
SROC	Studi e Ricerche sull'Oriente Cristiano
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TG	Theologie und Glaube
ThQ	Theologische Quartalschrift
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie
VC	Vigiliae Christianae
Virg.	Hymns on Virginitv
ZAW.NS	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums
ZDMG	Zeitschrift für Deutschen morgenlandischen Gesellschaft
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

INTRODUCTION

Aphrahat, the first known Father and a major writer of the Syriac Church, is the earliest extensive witness to Syriac speaking Christianity. He belongs to the period in the history of the Syriac Church when it was least hellenized, that is before 400 A. D. He gives us a literature representing a Christianity in its most semitic form, still largely free from Greek cultural and theological influences.¹

1. The Demonstration, its Style and Date

The term *tah wita* is used to indicate the works of Aphrahat. *Tah wita* means an appearance, showing forth, manifestation, a token, example, specimen, demonstration and an argument.² Syriac writers prefer the word Demonstration to denote his works. The twenty-three Demonstrations, written in elegant classical Syriac, are one of the earliest surviving literary works of the Syriac Church. Demonstrations I-X, which form the first group,

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- 1 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, (Cambridge, 1975),
2. S. P. Brock, "From antagonism to assimilation: Syriac attitudes to Greek learning", in N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews and R. Thomson (ed.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, DOS 1980, (Washington D. C., 1982), 17-19. Reprinted in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, (London, 1984), chapter 5.
- 2 J. Payne Smith (ed.), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, (Oxford, 1903), 609.

mainly deal with the basic aspects of Christian life, while the second group, Demonstrations XI-XXIII, in part consists in polemics against the Jewish practices, while the rest concentrates on certain current issues faced by his Church. Aphrahat's mentioning of the order of arrangements of the Demonstrations and the dates of their composition throws light on their genuineness. In Demonstration XXII:25, he says "twenty-two Demonstrations I have written according to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet". The Demonstrations according to him are 1. On Faith, 2. On Charity, 3. On Fasting, 4. On Prayer, 5. On Wars, 6. On the Sons of the Covenant, 7. On Penitents, 8. On the Resurrection of the Dead, 9. On Humility, 10. On Pastors, 11. On Circumcision, 12. On the Paschal Feast, 13. On the Sabbath, 14. On Exhortation, 15. On the Distinction between Foods, 16. On the Peoples which are in the place of the People, 17. On the Messiah, that He is the Son of God, 18. Against the Jews on Virginity and Sanctity, 19. Against the Jews on account of their Saying that they are Destined to be Gathered together, 20. On the Support of the Poor, 21. On Persecution and 22. On Death and the Latter Times. The twenty-third Demonstration begins again with the first letter of the Syriac alphabet;³ it is On the Grape Cluster.⁴

He writes about the dates of the composition of the Demonstrations:

I wrote the first ten in the six hundred and forty-eighth year of the kingdom of Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedonia, as was written at their conclusion. And

3 J. Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes* PS I, (Paris, 1894), xxii.

4 He mentions at the end of the first group of Demonstrations about the ten Demonstrations he had written in order to answer the questions presented before him by his friend; refer to Dem. X:9.

these last twelve I wrote in the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of the Greeks and of the Romans, that is, the kingdom of Alexander and in the thirty-fifth year of the king of Persia.⁵

About the date of composition of Demonstration XIV On Exhortation he writes in the following way:

This letter is written in the month Shebat of the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedonia and in the year thirty-fifth of the Persian king Shapur.⁶

He speaks about the composition of the Demonstration XXIII On the Grape Cluster:

I have written this letter to you my beloved in the month August of the six hundred and fifty-sixth year of the kingdom of Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedonia and in the year thirty-six of the Persian king Shapur.⁷

Thus he had written the first ten Demonstrations during the years 336-337, the next twelve were composed during 343-344, and the last one in 345.

Even though the Demonstrations are in prose, the prose often has poetic characteristics. Aphrahat excels in following semitic rhetorical tradition, that is the use of parallelism, rhythmic and syllabic patterns, paradigmatic catenae, chiasmus, thesis, antithesis etc.⁸ In the majority

5 Dem. XXII:25.

6 Dem. XIV:50.

7 Dem. XXIII:69.

8 Cf. M. M. Maude, "Rhythmic patterns in the Homilies of Aphrahat", *ATR* 17 (1935), 225-233. R. Murray, "Some rhetorical patterns in the early Syriac Literature", in R. H. Fischer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, (Chicago, 1977), 109-131. Refer also to my book, *The Use of the Gospel Parables in the Writings of Aphrahat and Ephrem*, (Frankfurt, 1996), 318-319.

of the four line units he presents a balanced syntactic structure; line 1 deals with the category of people to whom the exhortation is applicable, line 2 is the exhortation and lines 3 and 4 deal with the purpose of the exhortation. To illustrate it an example is shown below, taken from Demonstration XIV:16, which is a part of an exhortation to the clergy; the accompanying translations are very literal.⁹

<i>ʔw-iliday men mayyʔ</i>	6	Those who were born of water
<i>ʔwa-priqay b-dam yaqqir</i>	6	and saved by the precious Blood
<i>nezdahrʔn men murʔ</i>	6	should be careful of the fire (Mt. 3:12)
<i>ʔw-heššōkʔ barrʔyʔ</i>	6	and the outer darkness (Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

2. Identity of Aphrahat

Aphrahat does not mention his name or personal history in his Demonstrations. The manuscripts of the fifth and sixth centuries refer to him as ‘the Persian Sage’ or Mar Jacob the Persian Sage. In 714 A. D. the learned Syrian Orthodox scholar, George the bishop of the Arabians, in one of his epistles speaks about Aphrahat. After a detailed study of the available resources he admitted that he was unable to find out the proper name or his position in the community; but he was of the opinion that Aphrahat was very learned and well-versed in priestly writings.¹⁰ In a late manuscript of 1364, it is found “The Demonstration

⁹ The figures show the number of syllables in each unit.

¹⁰ The Syriac text of this letter of bishop George was edited by P. Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca*, (Leipzig, 1858), 108 ff. Refer also to W. Wright, *The Homilies of Aphraates, the Persian Sage*, (London, 1869), 19-37.

concerning the Grape, of the Sage Aphrahat who is Jacob, bishop of Mar Mathai".¹¹ Here the title 'Persian' is absent; the connection with the famous monastery of Mar Mathai is unlikely.

Although Aphrahat was translated into Armenian at an early date and was known to Gennadius,¹² his influence on later Syriac writers was not so great as that of his near contemporary Ephrem, and even his personal name properly Jacob was forgotten and he was simply known as 'the Persian Sage'. Gennadius also confuses Aphrahat with Jacob of Nisibis. For a long time his works were attributed to bishop Jacob of Nisibis. Only from the tenth century onwards does the name Aphrahat for the Persian Sage was begin to appear and it has been under this name that he is known to modern scholars.¹³ He has not received the appreciation he deserves and one of the main reasons for this is the lack of sufficient studies on Aphrahat. We can make probable conclusions with regard to the identity of Aphrahat from his *Demonstrations*.

a. Pagan

While examining the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat we get three internal pieces of evidence which suggest that Aphrahat was probably a pagan by birth. In the sixteenth *Demonstration On the Peoples which are in the place of the People* he writes:

... Moses said that I will provoke you with a people who are not a people, I shall anger you with a foolish people (Deut. 32:21). They are provoked by us. They

11 British Museum, *Orient*. 1017.

12 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, chapter 1.

13 He should not be confused with the Syrian ascetic Afraates, mentioned by Theodoret in his *Historia Religiosa*.

do not worship idols because of us, so that they will not be shamed by us for we have cast away idols and call lie the thing which our fathers left for us.¹⁴

The second piece of evidence is the words of Aphrahat while he argues against the Jews who worshipped the kings. He says:

It is proper for us to worship Jesus who turned our stubborn minds from all our worship of vain error and instructed us to worship, work for and serve one God our Father and maker.¹⁵

The third piece of evidence is also from the same *Demonstration On Messiah, who is the Son of God*:

Behold I who am of the Peoples have heard that Messiah has come. Before he had yet come, I believed in him. I worship the God of Israel through him.¹⁶

These three references are not absolute evidences that Aphrahat was a convert from paganism because he was speaking in the name of a community of Jews and Gentiles. These expressions could be valid not only for the Gentiles but also for the Jews, because according to him the main sin of Israel was idolatry.¹⁷ G. Bert,¹⁸ J. Parisot¹⁹ and E. J. Duncan²⁰ share the view that the above references indicate that Aphrahat was an adult convert from paganism. But Ortiz de Urbina²¹ and

14 Dem. XVI:7.

15 Dem. XVII:8.

16 Dem. XVII:10.

17 Dems XV:3, 4, 6; XVI:3, 4, 7 etc.

18 G. Bert, *Aphrahat's des Persischen Weisen Homilien*, (Leipzig, 1888), xiii.

19 J. Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes* PS I, xiv.

20 J. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates, the Persian Sage*, (Washington, 1945), 9.

21 Ortiz de Urbina, *Die Gottheit Christi bei Aphrahat*, (Rome, 1933), 21-22.

Marie Joseph Pierre²² are of the opinion that from the above references one cannot conclude that Aphrahat was a pagan by birth.

b. Persian

Syriac scholars agree that Aphrahat was of Persian nationality. His style, way of thinking, counting of the years indicate that he is from the Persian empire. The official language of the Persian empire was Persian. But the Christians in the east spoke Syriac. Aphrahat might have lived in a frontier region where Syriac was spoken freely.²³ The name Aphrahat itself reveals that he belonged to Persia. His counting of time according to the years of the Persian king is a testimony for his Persian citizenship.²⁴ Certain Syriac writers, evidently aware that he belongs in the east, connect Aphrahat with the monastery of Mar Mathai, near modern Mosul (Iraq). Another argument for the Persian citizenship of Aphrahat is that during his time the Arian controversy was very strong in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, such as Syria. If he was from Syria, he would have mentioned of it in his Demonstrations.²⁵

22 M. J. Pierre, *Aphraate Le Sage Persan: Les Exposés I*, SC 349, (Paris, 1988), 39.

23 J. Gwynn, *Selections Translated into English from the Hymns and Homilies of Ephraim the Syrian and from the Demonstrations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, LNPWF, 2nd Series, XIII, (Oxford, 1898; repr. Grand Rapids, MI., 1983), 157.

24 Dem. XIV:50.

25 Heretics were not a problem in the Church of Aphr. as much as the Jews, though he mentioned once the names of Marcion, Mani, Valentine and the Chaldeans in Dem. III:9.

c. Son of the Covenant (*Bār Qyāmā*)

The Demonstrations give direct evidence that Aphrahat was a son of the covenant or a *Bar qyāmā*.²⁶ The terms such as *aḥay* (my brothers), *aḥayn* (our brothers), *habībāy ihidāye* (dearly beloved solitaries) etc., which he used as terms of address in his Demonstrations and intended for the whole group of covenanters, give important testimony for his identity as a son of the covenant. Some of the evidences are the following; thus he exhorts his fellow covenanters how to be preserved in covenantal life as an experienced covenanter:

Therefore, this advice which I apply to myself is fitting, proper and right for you as well, my beloved *iḥ idāye* who do not take wives, and (you) virgins who are not with husbands.²⁷

These things have I written to you, my beloved, reminding myself as well as you. Accordingly, have a love for virginity as the heavenly portion which involves a communion with the Watchers of heaven.²⁸

All these things I have written to you, my beloved, because in our generation there are some who vow themselves to become solitaries, sons of the covenant and chaste, and it is we who carry on the contest against our adversary. And our adversary fights against us to turn us back to the nature from which we, of our free will, separated ourselves.²⁹

26 There is no universally accepted answer to the question of what is the identity of *bnāy qyāmā*. Most Syriac scholars have expressed their opinions on this topic. A good discussion is found in G. Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac Speaking Church", *OCP* 39 (1973), 191-215 and 419-444.

27 Dem. VI:4.

28 Dem. VI:19.

29 Dem. VII:5.

I wish to instruct to you, my beloved also about this matter which distresses me, this holy covenant, the virginity and sanctity in which we endure ..; my beloved, as best as I can, I shall instruct you.³⁰

From the above evidence we can make the probable conclusion that Aphrahat was a *bār qyāmā*; he was an *ih idāyā* (celibate, single, solitary) and a *qaddišā* (chaste, continent).

d. Bishop

The tenth and the fourteenth Demonstrations give evidence to conclude his identity as that of a clergy of high rank, probably a bishop. The fact that Aphrahat was chosen by the synod to compose a letter to the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and his manner of speaking in the fourteenth Demonstration justifies the probability of this conclusion. The fourteenth Demonstration begins by saying, "We all being gathered together have taken counsel to write this letter to all our brethren, the children of the Church in various places, the bishops, priests, deacons and the whole Church ...". We cannot doubt that Aphrahat was the author of this Demonstration because in the twenty-second Demonstration, while listing all his Demonstrations, he mentions this as the fourteenth one in order, denoted by the fourteenth Syriac alphabet *nun*. He writes, "And after the *Sabbath* (which is the thirteenth one) I have written an exhortation, as a result of the dissension which happened in our days".³¹ The way of speaking in the Demonstration on *Bnāy Qyāmā* and *On Pastors*, along with the Demonstration *On Exhortation*, gives the impression that Aphrahat is a man of authority.

30 Dem. XVIII:1.

31 Dem. XXII:25.

There are Syriac scholars who accept that he was a man of high ecclesial rank, but they do not say definitely he was a bishop.³²

3. Social and Ecclesial Situation of the Persian Church during the Time of Aphrahat

During the time Aphrahat wrote his *Demonstrations* the hostility between Rome and Persia was high. During this period, the Sasanian king Shapur II had taken a leading role in the reorganization of Zoroastrianism as a state religion. There was a strong relationship between the state and the religion. Every local district had its own Zoroastrian priest. These priests had not only religious jurisdiction but also a decisive voice in the choice of a successor to the throne and in the matters of the state. Under the Sasanian kings the priests collected the scattered tradition of the *Avesta* and made an official and normative redaction. Aphrahat does not mention the *Avesta* or criticize it in his *Demonstrations*. Perhaps criticizing the *Avesta* would have been dangerous because opposition to the *Avesta* was considered as opposition to the state power. Non-orthodox and heretical cults, and forbidden manners and customs came to be regarded as a pollution of the land and a serious offense to the true God.³³ The important incident in the Persian Church during the time of Aphrahat was the severe persecution on Christians by Shapur II and the martyrdom of many Christians.

Membership of a particular religious group was a means of self-identification in Persia. As long as the Roman

32 Ortiz de Urbina, "Aphrahat", in *NCE* I, (New York, 1967), 653. J. Forget, *De vita et scriptis Aphraatis Sapientis Persae*, (Louvain, 1882), 19.

33 P. W. Avery, "Iran", in *NEB* IX, (Chicago, 1973-74), 849.

empire remained pagan the Christian communities of Persia were not under the threat of persecution. When the emperor Constantine gave freedom of religion to the Christians in the Roman world, the Syro-Christian population of Persia began to feel sympathy with Roman policies for religious reasons. So the Sasanians suspected the Christians of having unpatriotic relations with the Romans. Thus Shapur II made efforts to perfect and enforce state orthodoxy; defection from the official faith was made a capital crime and the persecution of the heterodox, especially the Christians began.

From the Demonstrations we know that during the time of Aphrahat, there were many bishops, priests, deacons and ascetics in the Persian Church.³⁴ Adiabene was an important ecclesiastical province. There were six suffragan dioceses under Adiabene.³⁵ Eusebius reports the joy of the emperor Constantine when he heard about the well-established Persian Church, 'Imagine, then, with what joy I heard the tidings, so accordant with what I wish most of all, namely that the crowds of these people, the Christians, ornament the foremost cities of Persia far and wide'.³⁶ Ascetical celibacy had special theological significance in the Syriac Church. Christian marriage is the sacred sign of the union of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:28-32). But according to the concept of the Syriac Church the consecrated virgins are in immediate contact with the holy reality of which marriage is the sign. Many Christians have taken for granted the habits of rigorous sexual abstinence. In the Syriac Church husbands and

34 Dem. XIV:1.

35 J. M. Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne I*, (Beyrouth, 1965), 48. Cf. also Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes* PS I, xxvi.

36 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV:13.

wives could withdraw from the marriage bed after baptism, by doing so, they regained a state of holiness. The term holiness was co-terminous with sexual abstinence.³⁷ The core of the Church of Aphrahat was the small group of continent men called sons of the covenant (*Bn̄ȳ Qȳm̄*) and continent women called daughters of the covenant (*Bn̄th̄ Qȳm̄*). Covenant in the Syriac Church denoted commitment to celibacy or, in the case of the married, the continence. A covenanter accepts Christ's call to leave his dear ones (Mt. 10:34-39) and by becoming single-minded he accepts circumcision of heart (Jos. 5:2) and puts on Christ and 'stands up' for him. Their covenantal relationship was for attaining the original state of the humanity of Adam and Eve.

4. Aphrahat's Dependence on the Sacred Scripture

The main source for the works of Aphrahat is the Sacred Scripture. He interpreted the Sacred Scripture mainly to exhort the Church about Christian principles on the one hand, and on the other to stabilise the wavering faith of some of the Christian community in the face of the attractions posed by Judaism. He engaged in a complex process of interpretation making the Sacred Scripture relevant and meaningful to the community and its individuals in their particular circumstances. He accepts many a time that Jesus is the author of the Gospel,³⁸ he also recognizes God as the ultimate author of the Gospel.

37 R. Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical vows at Baptism in the Ancient Church", *NTS* 21 (1974-75), 59-80. Cfr also S. P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources", *JJS* 30 (1979), 212-232.

38 Dems IV:10, VIII:3, XIV:9, XXI:21, XXIII:53 etc.

In order to learn and understand one has to make a thorough investigation of the word of God, but it is better to fear God, the Giver of the word, with a pure heart.³⁹

Certain basic principles which lie behind Aphrahat's use of the Scripture are expressed in Demonstration XXII:26. They are the following.

(i). Sacred Scripture contains the wisdom of God, therefore no person can reach the depth and breadth of it.

For if the days of a man should be as many as all the days of the world from Adam to the end of ages, and he should sit and meditate upon the Sacred Scriptures, he would not comprehend all the power of the depth of the words. And no one can rise up to the wisdom of God ...

(ii). Sacred Scripture can be interpreted in multiple ways. Therefore when presented with many interpretations he asks his audience to accept that which pleases him.

When ten wise men shall speak to him about one saying in ten (different) ways, let him accept that which pleases him; and because something does not please him, let him not scorn the wise because the word of God is like a pearl which has a beautiful appearance on any side to which you turn it.

He accepts the fact here that the same interpretation which is valid to one person in a particular context may not be valid for another person in another context, or to the same person in another context.

(iii). He accepts the communitarian influence on the interpretation of the biblical texts to be found in the Demonstrations.

39 Dem. XXIII:2.

Whatever is written in these treatises was not written according to the mind of one man, nor for the persuasion of one reader, but according to the way of thinking of the whole Church and for the persuasion of the whole faith.

(iv). He is of the opinion that 'a disciple of the Sacred Scripture' is 'a teacher of it'.

Everyone who reads the Sacred Scriptures, the former and the latter, from both Testaments, and reads with persuasion, will learn and teach.

The main aim of the learning and the reading of the Sacred Scripture is to put them into practice and to fulfil the commandment of self renunciation and the love of God.⁴⁰ He quotes from most books of the Old and New Testament to exhort his audience or to serve as testimony texts to the arguments he is presenting in the Demonstrations. The citations vary in each Demonstrations according to the nature and context of the argument.

5. The Application of the Sacred Scripture is of Fundamental Concern

It is the application and not the method of interpretation that is of main concern for Aphrahat. Unlike the later patristic tradition he is not interested in any set of rules governing the method of exegesis. Before the Gospels were recorded in their present form they had already been lived and had undergone transformation in the early Church. So the Gospel has both an original setting and a setting given it by the early Church. Aphrahat also has understood the Sacred Scripture in his own historical context, and has applied its text according to the needs of the community. Here he has taken a certain freedom of

⁴⁰ Dem. XIV:19 and 32.

interpretation just as did the evangelists. He identifies the situation of the Christian as the same as that described in the Gospel. He therefore brings the Gospel to throw light on their situation. So the Gospel is a paradigm to which different situations in time and place can be related. The first stage in the process of the exegesis is the particular situation which the author has in mind. In the light of the situation he will ask questions of the Gospel and allow the Gospel to speak to the particular context of the people.

Because of the paradigmatic function of the Scripture, Aphrahat often limits his attention to a particular aspect of the text, ignoring the rest. It is difficult to describe the exegesis of Aphrahat in terms of 'literal' versus 'allegorical'. Certain interpretations in Aphrahat could be described as allegorical in a fairly loose sense, for example, the interpretation of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) in Demonstration XX:7-12, or the Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10) in Demonstration I:11. The interpretation is a decoding of the message, where, once the decoding has taken place, the vehicle of the message loses importance. For Aphrahat, the Scripture itself remains paradigmatic and, according to the various contexts, innumerable interpretations are possible for a particular passage of Scripture. This is why he has given different interpretations in different contexts to one and the same aspect of a text of the Scripture. For example the seed from the parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:3-8; Mk. 4:3-8; Lk. 8:5-8) stands for the clergy, the word of God and the discourse of the wise⁴¹, while both the covenanters and the Church represent the merchant who bought the pearl (Mt. 13:45-46).⁴²

41 Dem. XIV:38 and 43.

42 Dems VI:1, XIV:39.

6. Prominent Concerns of Aphrahat in his Exegesis

Both Scripture and Tradition played an important role in the exegesis of Aphrahat. We point out here some of the main concerns of Aphrahat in his use of the Sacred Scripture.

An important aspect we find in his exegesis is the appropriate reward for each action; it has its roots in the Bible itself. In the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16), going beyond the original meaning of the parable four times⁴³ he insists on the aspect of demanding wages by those who worked in the whole day. In the original context, in this parable the determinative principle for wages was grace, not justice. But he introduced a tension between grace and justice in the interpretation of the parable. The parables of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16), the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-17) and the Last Judgement (Mt. 25:31-46) are interpreted in an eschatological context in Demonstration VIII:21 and 22, in order to reveal that each person will get an appropriate reward at the end.

The heroes and patriarchs of the Old Testament were given a prominent place in the interpretation; he is sharing here the Old Testament tradition. Aphrahat has taken them as types. Abraham, as father of the Peoples as well as of the People, gains an important place in his interpretation. For Aphrahat, in the interpretation of Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), the bosom of Abraham is the kingdom of heaven.⁴⁴ Along with other Old Testament figures, he presents Joseph as a type of Christ.⁴⁵

43 Dems VI:1; XIV:16, 38 and XXII:18.

44 Dem. XX:12.

45 ... His father sent Joseph to visit his brothers ... His Father sent Jesus to visit His brothers ... (Dem. XXI:9).

The influence of the Syriac ascetic tradition is an important factor behind his exegesis.⁴⁶ The Demonstration VI is a major work of Aphrahat which demonstrates the influence of ascetical ideas in his interpretation. Alienation from the world and holiness to enter into the bridal chamber are the two major themes here.

Aphrahat introduces certain customs and traditions of his own time in the exegesis. For example, in the interpretation of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), he probably interposes certain marriage customs of his own time when he says that the marriage feast for Eve's daughters lasts seven days and their adornment consists of wool. He insists on the aspect of preparing wedding gift for the Bridegroom.⁴⁷

According to the Syriac tradition the departed are thought of as sleeping in Sheol until the coming of Christ, it is surprising to find that Sheol can also take on the role of a place of torment normally reserved for Gehenna. In the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), he speaks of the rich man in Sheol, which is a place of torment;⁴⁸ here, however, he is following simply the Gospel tradition. In the Closed Door (Lk. 13:24-30) he refers to the weeping and gnashing of teeth in Sheol,⁴⁹ but this too may be influenced by the Rich Man and Lazarus.

46 For the early Syriac ascetic tradition see S. P. Brock, Early Syrian "sceticism" *Numen* 20 (1973), 1-19, reprinted in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, (London, 1984), chapter 1; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 11-18.

47 Dem. VI:1 and 7.

48 Dem. XX:9.

49 Dem. VI:6.

Clothing imagery, which has its roots in the Bible and in Judaism⁵⁰ found its full development in Aphrahat. He associates the Guest without a Wedding Garment (Mt. 22:11-14) with baptism. The wedding garment is the robe of glory, which is Christ Himself (Rom. 13:14) and which every Christian puts on in baptism, is a pledge of the resurrection and the re-entry into paradise. This wedding garment is a necessary condition for entering into the marriage feast and the bridal chamber.⁵¹

Aphrahat shares the rich Syriac tradition of the use of certain titles which have their roots mainly in the Scripture, in Judaism and in part in ancient Mesopotamian tradition. These titles are applied to Christ, the Apostles, bishops and even to the Church. Some of the more important titles are bridegroom, shepherd, steward, merchant, fisherman, farmer etc.

7. Aphrahat and Ephrem

Most Syriac scholars are of the opinion that Ephrem did not know the writings of Aphrahat.⁵² But there are cases where the wording of Ephrem almost agrees with Aphrahat. We mention two of them here. In the exegesis of the Sower (Mt. 13:3-8; Mk. 4:3-8; Lk. 8:5-8), Ephrem has the wording in Nat. III:14, "His seed fell on

50 It is mentioned in Gen. 3:21, Ps. 132:16, Ben Sira 50:11, Dan. 10:5 and in the Targum tradition. In the Syriac tradition, in Acts of Thomas, Acts of John, Doctrine of Addai etc. Refer to S. P. Brock, "Clothing metaphors as a means of theological expression in Syriac tradition" in M. Schmidt and C. F. Geyer (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter*, 11-38. Reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, chapter 11.

51 Dem. VI:1 and 6.

52 R. Murray says that there is no evident probability that Ephrem knew the Demonstrations; refer to *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 338.

our land” which almost agrees with “The seed of our Lord fell on our land” of Demonstration XIV:47. In the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), M. Frag III:165-166 has, “Let us keep the meeting time of the Bridegroom so that we may enter with him into the bridal chamber” is almost similar to the wording, “Let us keep the meeting time of the Glorious Bridegroom so that we may enter with him into his bridal chamber” of Demonstration VI:1. The ideas expressed in H. Arm. XLVI:37-41 may reflect Aphrahat’s long exhortation to the covenanters in Demonstration VI.⁵³

8. The Present Translation

This volume contains the first ten Demonstrations and the second volume the last thirteen Demonstrations which are presented according to the order given by Aphrahat. For the translation the editions of the Syriac text by J. Parisot and W. Wright are used. I am depending on Parisot for the numbering of the paragraphs. I have tried to present a text-oriented translation as far as possible, aiming not to lose the semitic flavour and expressions of the Syriac original, and to retain the connotations and usages of the various Syriac theological expressions. The translation tries to maintain the distinctive characteristics of Aphrahat’s writing,

53 It is difficult to say how these similarities in phraseology can be explained, though perhaps they simply represent common exegetical topoi. But they could be added to the two cases of borrowing that have been recently presented by two scholars. P. J. Botha makes a comparison between Dem. XII and Azym. XXI and he suggests the possibility of Ephrem’s knowledge of Aphrahat’s Demonstrations; cf. “A comparison between Aphrahat and Ephrem on the subject of Passover”, in H. F. Stander (ed.), *Acta Patristica et Byzantina III*, (Pretoria, 1992), 46-62. S. P. Brock draws attention to a passage in CDiat. XVI:25 which reflects a reading in Dem. XXIII:9; “Notulae Syriacae: some miscellaneous identifications”, *LM* 108 (1995), 69-78.

especially his imaginative use of the Sacred Scripture. But it does not mean that a skilled eye is needed on the part of the reader to appreciate the style of Aphrahat expressed through the translation, for the translation is also reader-oriented and it uses contemporary idioms which help the reader to understand the obscure and difficult passages of Aphrahat. Sometimes Aphrahat uses particular terms with a variety of different meanings and the translator is forced to give different English renderings according to the various contexts, and so this may cause one to lose a linking element in Aphrahat's style and thought pattern.

Even though certain Demonstrations have been published individually in English, as far as I know, this is the first time the Demonstrations as a whole are published in two volumes for the readers of Aphrahat. I follow Peshitta in references to the quotations of Aphrahat from the Bible through out the translations. Each Demonstration has an introduction in order to help the reader. The Demonstrations are cited using Roman numerals for the Demonstration and Arabic for the sections.

THE LETTER OF A FRIEND

A friend asks to Aphrahat to instruct him about faith. Unfortunately the first two sentences of this letter are missing in the Syriac manuscript; the whole text is available to us in Armenian translation.

1. To you beloved, I send my questions and inquiries, I ask instruction of you because of the necessity which is in me. Do not refuse to hear me. My mind induces me to be instructed by you on many subjects.⁵⁴ Open to me the spiritual senses of your mind and show to me something of what you have understood from the Holy Books, so that my want is filled by you and you satisfy my hunger with your teaching and quench my thirst from the fountain of your instruction. Though many things are laid in my mind to ask you, but they kept in reserve with me, so that when I come to you, you may instruct me about all matters.

2. But first of all-and this is the most pressing for me-I wish that you write and instruct me about our faith, how it is, what is the foundation of it, on what edifice it rises up and on what it is placed, how is its completion and consummation, and what are the works needed for it. However I alone firmly believe that

54 The Syriac text is not available up to this point. We have borrowed it from the Armenian translation.

God is one,
who made the heaven and the earth from the beginning,
He adorned the world with His works,
He made man in His image,
it is He who accepted the offering of Abel,
He took away Enoch because of His goodness,
He sheltered Noah because of His righteousness,
He chose Abraham because of His faith,
He spoke with Moses because of His humility,
He also spoke with all the prophets, and furthermore He
sent His Christ into the world.

My brother, I believe indeed in all these things that
they are so. Because of this, my brother, I request of you
that you write to me and demonstrate to me what are the
works required for this our faith and (thus) you will give
me rest.

I THE DEMONSTRATION ON FAITH

Aphrahat makes it clear at the very outset itself that the reason for the formulation of this Demonstration is the inquiry of someone to him with regard to faith. He is only happy to instruct him on faith as much as he can; in his words "Whoever receives by grace, it is also right for him to give by grace". He tells the inquirer that the Holy Books are the source of faith; out of the rich treasury of faith contained in them he has taken a few things and written them down for the recollection of the inquirer. Faith is like a building which is built up into perfection through various pieces of work, while its foundation is placed on the firm rock, which is Christ. He introduces various Old Testament and New Testament references about the rock in order to show that Christ is the rock already foretold. Christ is the foundation of the building as well as the dweller of the building. A person who becomes a house and a dwelling place for Christ must see to what is fitting to the service of Christ who dwells in him; he gives a long list of things which will please the dweller in section four. The true faith is revealed through good works. The righteous make their building with silver, gold and with precious stones, and the wicked make it with cane, straw and with stubble. The building will be proved by fire on the last day. Gold, silver and precious stones will be preserved in the midst of fire. In section ten Christ is also the light of the world. He presents the heroes

and patriarchs of the Old Testament who found favour before God through their faith. They even performed miracles by their faith (sections 13-16). He speaks about the miracles of Jesus which were performed because of the faith of the people. He introduces also the various teachings of Jesus on Faith (section 17). In section eighteen, depending on the Letter to the Hebrews chapter 11, he exhibits the mighty works done by faith. In section nineteen he gives a brief summary of the principal doctrines of Christianity. He concludes it by saying that "This is the faith of the Church of God". Then he gives a moral instruction here. He concludes the Demonstration by reminding the inquirer that he has the obligation both to believe and make others believe these things, and to know and make others to know them.

1. My beloved, I have received your letter and when I read it, it gladdened me much, that you cast out your mind to these inquiries.⁵⁵ For this request which you have asked me, is given freely, and it will be received freely (Mt. 10:8).⁵⁶ And whoever has and wishes to withhold from the one who seeks, that which he withholds will be taken away from him (Mt. 25:29). For whoever receives by grace, it is also right for him to give by grace. And my beloved, about the matter you have asked me, I will write to you in accordance with what my feebleness has comprehended. And also that which you have not sought from me, I will beg from God and I will instruct you. But hear, my beloved, and open the inner eyes of your heart to me and the spiritual senses of your mind to that which I speak to you.

55 From the structure of this Dem. it is clear that this is written as a result of someone's request to Aphr. for instruction on various aspects of the faith. The inquirer need not be a real person; he can be a creation of Aphr. in the place of the audience.

56 This aspect he stresses again in Dem. X:8, there he mentions that he had already referred it in the Dem. on Faith.

2. For faith is composed with many things and it is completed with many colours. It is indeed like a building which is built by many works and its edifice ascends up on high. However know, my beloved, that in the foundations of the building stones are laid and then upon the stones the whole building rises until it is completed. So also the foundation of our whole faith is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true stone. And upon this very stone, the faith is laid. And upon the faith, the whole building rises until it is perfected. The foundation is the beginning of the whole building. For when any person is brought near to faith, he is placed on the stone, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. And his building is neither shaken by the waves nor is it harmed by the winds. It does not fall as a result of storms because its edifice has risen from the rock of the true stone (Mt. 7:24-27; Lk. 6:47-49).⁵⁷ When I called Christ the Stone, I have not said it out of my own mind, but the prophets have already called him the Stone; I will show (this) to you.

3. But now hear about faith, which was placed on the Stone and about the building which has risen on the Stone. For, first a person believes; when he believes, he loves. When he comes to love, he hopes; when he has come to hope, he is justified. When he is justified, he is perfected. When he is perfected, he is completed. When his whole building has risen up, completed and perfected, then it becomes the house and the temple for the dwelling of Christ as Jeremiah, the prophet said, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord: if you amend your ways and actions, you are the temple of the Lord" (Jer. 7:4-5). He said again through the prophet, "I will dwell among them and I will walk among them" (Lev.

57 R. Murray has given a detailed study on this topic, cf. R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 205-238.

26:12; 2 Cor 6:16). The blessed Apostle also thus said, "You are the temple of God, then the spirit of Christ dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16). Again our Lord also said to his disciples as follows, "You are in me and I am in you" (Jn. 14:20).

4. When the house becomes a dwelling place, then the man begins to take care of what is needed to the one who dwells in the building. For example, if a king or a man held in honour, who is called by the title of king, should dwell in the house, then, all the royal provisions and all the services are required for the king, which are necessary for the honour of the king. For, the king will neither stay nor he dwell in a house, which is devoid of any good things; rather complete decoration of the house is needed for the king, with nothing wanting in it. If anything is lacking there in the house where the king dwells, the housekeeper is handed over to death because he has not provided the service for the king. So also the man who becomes a house and a dwelling place for Christ should see to what is fitting for the service of Christ who dwells in him and with what things he will please him. For, first he builds up his building on the stone, which is Christ. Upon this stone, the faith is established and the whole building rises up on faith.

Pure fasting is required for his habitation of the house, and it is confirmed in faith.

Pure prayer is required for it, and it is accepted in faith.

Love is needed for it, and it is composed in faith.

Alms are needed, and they are given in faith.

He asks for humility, and it is adorned by faith.

He chooses for himself virginity, and it is loved in faith.

He brings holiness to himself, and it is planted in faith.

He also meditates on wisdom, and it is found in faith.

He also seeks hospitality, and it is increased in faith.

Simplicity is sought for him, and it is mingled with faith.

He desires also perseverance, and it is accomplished in faith.

He is mindful of moderation, and it is gained in faith.

He loves mourning, and it is visible in faith.

He also seeks purity, and it is kept by faith.

All these things are asked for by faith which is placed on the rock of the true stone, which is Christ. These deeds are required by Christ, the king who dwells in people who through these works are built up.

5. You may say, if Christ is placed as the foundation, how does Christ also dwell in the building when it is finished. Both these things the blessed Apostle indeed spoke of, for he said, "I as a wise master-builder have laid the foundation" (1 Cor. 3:10). There he marked out about the foundation and showed it. For he said thus, "No one can lay another foundation apart from this, which is (already) laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). And (to show) that Christ also dwells in the building, there is the word that was written above, that Jeremiah called people 'temples' and it is God who dwells in them. The Apostle said, "The spirit of Christ dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). And our Lord said "I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). Therefore there is agreement between the words that 'Christ dwells among human beings who believe in him' and 'he is the foundation upon whom the whole building rises up'.

6. But I will come to my former words when I said that Christ was called the stone in the prophets. For,

David said about him of old, "That the stone which the builders have rejected has become the head of the building" (Ps. 118:22; Lk. 20:17). How have the builders rejected this stone which is Christ, if they did not thus reject him before Pilate, saying "This man shall not be king over us?" (Jn. 19:15). And again in that parable which our Lord spoke: "A man of noble birth went to receive the kingdom and to return to rule over them, and they sent messengers after him saying, This one shall not be king over us" (Lk. 19:14). In these things they rejected the stone which is Christ. And how has it become the head of the building, if it did not rise up over the building of the Gentiles, and upon it their whole building goes up? Who are the builders? If not the priests and Pharisees who did not build a strong building. But they were destroying everything which he was building, as it is written in the prophet Ezekiel, "He was building the wall, but they were beating against it, so that it may fall" (Ezek. 13:10). And again it is written, "That I sought among them a man who would enclose the fence and stand in the breach for the sake of the land so that I should not destroy it, but I found none" (Ezek. 22:30). Again Isaiah also prophesied beforehand about this stone. He said thus, "Thus says the Lord, behold I lay in Zion a tried stone, in the precious corner (as) the head of foundations wall" (Isa. 28:16). He said again there, "Everyone who believes in it shall not fear" (Isa. 28:16). "Whoever falls on that stone shall be broken, and all on whom it shall fall, it will crush him" (Mt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18). For the people of the house of Israel fell upon it and their destruction was for ever (Isa. 8:14-15). It shall fall on the image and crush it (Dan. 2:34). The Gentiles believed on it and they did not fear.

7. He showed (us) about that stone which was placed as the head of the wall and the foundation. If that

stone was placed as the foundation, how did it also become the head of the wall, if not, when our Lord came and placed faith in the earth like a foundation and he rose above all the heavens like the head of the wall so that the whole building was completed with stones from bottom to the top? I said with regard to the faith, that he placed his faith on the earth; David proclaimed this beforehand about Christ. For he said, "For faith shall shoot up from the earth" (Ps. 85:11). And just above, again he said, "Righteousness looked down from heaven" (Ps. 85:11).

8. Again Daniel also said about this stone, which is Christ. For he said, "The stone was cut from the mountain without hands and it smote the image; and the whole earth was filled with it" (Dan. 2:34-35). He fore-showed this about Christ, that the whole earth will be filled by him. For behold, from the faith of Christ all the ends of the earth have been filled as David said, "The word of the Gospel of Christ went out into the whole earth" (Ps. 19:4). Again when he sent the Apostles out he said to them thus, "Go out and instruct all the Peoples, that they may believe in me" (Mt. 28:19). Also the prophet Zechariah prophesied again about this stone, which is Christ. He said, "I saw the headstone of equality and of love" (Zech. 4:7). And why did he say 'beginning' (head)⁵⁸ if not because from the beginning he was with his Father (Jn. 1:1). And also he said 'of love' because, when he came into the world he said to his disciples thus, "This is my commandment, that you should love one another" (Jn. 15:12). And again he said, "I have called you my friends" (Jn. 15:15). And the blessed Apostle said as follows, "God loved us in the love of His Son" (Eph. 2:4-5). It is true that Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (Eph. 5:2).

58 The Syriac word *rišaya* has the meaning head, chief, beginning etc.

9. He described clearly and demonstrated about the stone. "Behold upon this stone, I will open seven eyes" (Zech. 3:9). What indeed are the seven eyes which were opened on the stone if not, the Spirit of God who rested on Christ with seven operations as the prophet Isaiah said, "The Spirit of God, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, shall rest and reside upon him?" (Isa. 11:2). These are the seven eyes which were opened on the stone. "These are the seven eyes of the Lord which look over the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10).

10. But this was also said about Christ. He said thus that a light has been given to all the Peoples, as the prophet Isaiah says, "I have given you as light to all the Peoples so that you might be my salvation until the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6). David also said again, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). The word and also the discourse of the Lord is Christ as it is written in the beginning of the Gospel of our Saviour,⁵⁹ "In the beginning was the word" (Jn. 1:1). Again about the light he witnessed there, "The light was shining in the darkness and the darkness did not come upon it" (Jn. 1:5). What indeed is this, "The light was shining in the darkness and the darkness did not attain upon it", if not Christ whose light shone in the midst of the people of the house of Israel and the people of the house of Israel did not attain upon the light of Christ; because they did not believe in him as it is written, "He came to his own, but his own did not receive him?" (Jn. 1:11). Our Lord Jesus also named them as darkness, for he spoke to his disciples as follows, "What I speak to you in the darkness,

⁵⁹ It is possible that the version of the Gospel which Aphr. used here has got John 1:1 in the beginning, which can be the *Diatessaron*.

you speak in the light" (Mt. 10:27). "Let your light shine among the Peoples" (Mt. 5:16), because they received the light of Christ who is the light to the Peoples. Again he said to his Apostles, "You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:14). Again he said to them, "Let your light shine before the people that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). Again he showed about himself, that he is the light; for he said to his disciples, "Walk, while there is light to you, before the darkness comes upon you" (Jn. 12:35). He said to them again, "Believe in the light, that you may be sons of the light" (Jn. 12:36). Again he said, "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). He also said, "No man lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel or under the bed or puts it in a hidden place; but puts it on the lamp-stand that everyone may see the light of the lamp" (Mt. 5:15). The shining lamp is Christ as David said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths" (Ps. 119:105).

11. Again prophet Hosea also said, "Light for yourselves a lamp and seek the Lord" (Hos. 10:12). And our Lord Jesus Christ said, "What woman is there who has ten coins and she loses one of them, does she not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek her coin which she has lost?" (Lk. 15:8).⁶⁰ What then, does this woman signify, if not the congregation of the house of Israel which was given ten commandments, and they lost the first commandment, that in which he warned them saying "I am the Lord your God who took you up from the land of Egypt" (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). And when they

⁶⁰ When Aphr. uses the parable of the Lost Coin against the Jews he does not follow either the message or the spirit of the original parable. CDiat. also employs this parable in an anti-Jewish context. L. Leloir (ed. and tr.), *Saint Éphrem: Commentaire de l'évangile concordant, Texte Syriaque*, CBM 8, (Dublin, 1963), 130.

lost their first commandment, also the nine which are after it they could not keep because the nine hung on the first. While they worshipped Baal, it was an impossible thing that they should keep the nine commandments. For they lost the first commandment like that woman who lost one coin from the ten. And the prophet cried to them that "Light for yourselves a lamp and seek the Lord" (Hos. 10:12). Again the prophet Isaiah also said, "Seek the Lord, when you have found him, call upon him; When he is near, let the sinner leave his way and the wicked man his thought" (Isa. 55:6-7). That lamp shone indeed, but they did not seek the Lord, their God with it. "His light shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not attain it" (Jn. 1:5). The lamp rose on the lamp-stand but those who were in the house did not see its light. Now what does it mean that the lamp rose on the lamp-stand, if not, his lifting up on the cross. By this the whole house became dark over them. For when they crucified him, the light grew dark before them and it shone among the Peoples, because from the time of the sixth hour, that they crucified him, until the ninth hour, there was darkness in the whole land of Israel (Mt. 27:45). The sun set in the mid-day and the land grew dark in the bright day, as it is written by prophet Zechariah, "It shall be on that day, says the Lord, I will make the sun to set at mid-day and I will darken the land in the bright day" (Zech. 14:6-7; Amos 8:9).

12. Now I come to my former topic of faith, that upon there rise up all the good works of the building. And again what I said with regard to the building was not done so in a strange way, but the blessed Apostle wrote in the First letter to the Corinthians, saying, "I as a wise master-builder have laid the foundation, but everyone builds upon it" (1 Cor. 3:10). One builds (with) silver, gold and (with) precious stones. Another builds

(with) cane, straw and stubble. That building will be proved by fire in the last day. Gold, silver and the precious stones however will be preserved in the midst of fire because they are a firm building. Fire has power over straw, cane and stubble, and they will catch fire. What is the gold, silver and the precious stones upon which the building rises up, if not the good works of faith, which are preserved in the fire because in that firm building Christ dwells and he is the one preserving it from fire. Let us see and understand from the example which God also gave to us in this world, so that the promises of that world may be certain to us. Let us then understand from the three righteous men, Hananiah, Azariah and Misael (Dan. 3:21) who were cast into the fire, but were not burned, the fire had no power over them because they had built a firm building and rejected the commandment of Nebuchadnezzar, the king; they did not worship the image which he made. Fire immediately overpowered those who had transgressed the commandment of God and it burned them up; they were burned without any mercy. Then the Sodomites were burned like straw, cane and stubble (Gen. 19:24, 28). Nadab and Abihu who transgressed the commandment of God also were burned (Num. 3:4; Lev. 10:1-2). Again 250 men who were offering incense were burned (Num. 16:35). Again two captains and 100 of their people were burned when they approached the mountain where Elijah was sitting, who ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kgs 1:9-16; 2:11). The slanderers also were burned because they dug a pit for the righteous men (Dan. 3:22). Therefore my beloved the righteous will be proved in the fire like gold, silver and precious stones, and the wicked will be burned in the fire like grass, cane and stubble; for the fire will have power over them and they will burn as the prophet Isaiah said, "By fire will the Lord judge and by

it will he test all flesh" (Isa. 66:16). He also said, "You shall go out and see the corpses of the men who acted wickedly against me, that neither shall their worm die nor shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be a wonder to all flesh" (Isa. 66:24).

13. The Apostle also explained to us about this building and about this foundation; for, he said thus, "No man can lay on other foundation apart from this one (already) laid, who is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). The Apostle spoke again about faith which is mingled with hope and love. For he said thus, "These are the three which remain, faith, hope and love" (1 Cor. 13:13). He showed about faith that, it is laid first on a firm foundation.

14. In the case of Abel, his offering was accepted because of his faith (Gen. 4:4).⁶¹

Enoch was removed from death because he was pleasing in his faith (Gen. 5:24).

Noah was protected from flood because he believed (Gen. 6:7-9).

Abraham was blessed because of his faith and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:9).

Isaac was beloved because he believed (Rom. 9:10).

Jacob was preserved because of his faith (Gen. 31:1-21; Mal. 1:2).

Joseph was tested in the water of strife because of his faith, but he was delivered from his trial (Gen. 39:7-20). His Lord placed a testimony in him as David said, "He laid a testimony in Joseph" (Ps. 81:5).

61 A similar litany of examples for faith is found in Heb. 11.

Moses performed many wonderful miracles through faith. He destroyed the Egyptians with ten plagues through faith. He also divided the sea by faith and allowed the people to pass and drowned the Egyptians in its midst (Ex. 14:15-31). He cast a piece of wood in the bitter water by faith and it became sweet. He caused manna to come down by faith and satisfied his people. He stretched out his hands by faith and overcame Amalek as it is written, "His hands were (lifted up) in faith till the sunset" (Ex. 17:12). So also by faith he ascended the mountain Sinai having fasted twice for forty days. He also conquered Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites by faith (Num. 21:21-35).

15. My beloved, this is a great wonder and amazement which Moses did in the Red Sea, when he divided the water by faith (Ex. 14:15-31), they stood up like high mountains and large steep rocks (Ps. 78:13). They were standing firm at the commandment and were bound up as in water skins (Ps. 33:7), and were shut up in the height as in the depth. Their soft nature did not pass beyond the boundary, but they changed the nature of their creation. A thing created without senses became obedient. Waves were lifted up and were waiting for the retribution once the people should pass on. The storms wonderfully stood still and looked out for the commandment and the retribution. The foundations that are from the eternal generations were revealed. The moisture that is from the beginning (Gen. 1:9) became dry suddenly. The gates lifted up their heads and the gates that were from eternity were lifted up (Ps. 24:7, 9). The column of light entered and illuminated the whole camp. The people passed on in faith, but the Judgement of righteousness came on Pharaoh, on his forces and on his chariots.

16. So also Joshua, the son of Nun divided the Jordan by his faith and the sons of Israel crossed as in the days of Moses (Jos. 3). But know, my beloved, that this crossing of Jordan was opened up three times; first, through Joshua, the son of Nun, second, through Elijah, then through Elisha. For the wording of the Book makes known that opposite this crossing of Jericho, there Elijah was taken up to heaven. As when Elisha returned from following him, he divided the Jordan and crossed, and the sons of the prophets of Jericho came out to meet Elisha and said, "The spirit of Elijah has abided on Elisha" (2 Kgs 2:8-15). When the people crossed in the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, it is written as follows, "The people crossed opposite Jericho" (Jos. 3:16). Also Joshua, the son of Nun, cast down the walls of Jericho by faith, and they fell down without trouble. He also destroyed thirty-one kings by faith and caused the children of Israel to inherit the land. Again he stretched out his hands to heaven in faith and held back the sun in Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ayalon (Jos. 10:13): they were stayed and stood firm from their courses. But summing up: all the righteous, our fathers, were victorious in everything they did by faith, as the blessed Apostle also testifies about them all, "They prospered by faith" (Heb. 11:33, 39). Solomon also said, "Many men were called merciful, but who finds a faithful man?" (Prov. 20:6). Again Job spoke as follows, "My innocence will not pass from me; I shall hold fast in my righteousness" (Job 27:5-6).

17. Our Saviour also said thus to all who approached him to be healed, "Let it be to you according to your faith" (Mt. 9:29). When the blind man came near to him, he said to him, "Do you believe that I can heal you?" That blind man said to him, "Yes my Lord I believe" (Mt. 9:28). And his faith opened his eyes. And

to him, whose son was sick he said, "Believe and your son will live". He said to him, "My Lord, I do believe, help my little faith" (Mk. 9:23-24). And his son was healed through his faith. Also when the servant of the king came to him, his boy was healed by his faith, as he said to our Lord, "Speak with a word, and my boy will be healed" (Mt. 8:8). Our Lord was amazed at his faith and it was done to him according to his faith. And also the case of the chief of the synagogue, when he besought him concerning his daughter, he said to him thus, "Only firmly believe and your daughter shall live" (Mk. 5:23, 35-36). He believed, his daughter revived and stood up. When Lazarus died our Lord said to Martha, "If you believe, your brother shall rise". Martha said to him, "Yes, my Lord, I do believe" (Jn. 11:23, 27). And he raised him after four days. Also Simon, who was called Kepha, because of his faith he was called 'firm rock' (Mt. 16:18). Again when our Lord gave the sacrament of baptism to his Apostles, he said to them thus, "He who believes and is baptised shall live and he who does not believe shall be judged" (Mk. 16:16). He said also to his Apostles, "If you believe and do not doubt, there is nothing that you cannot do" (Mt. 21:21-22). For, as our Lord walked on the waves of the sea, Simon also walked with him by his faith; but when he doubted about his faith and began to sink, our Lord called him, "You of little faith" (Mt. 14:31). When the Apostles requested to our Lord, they besought nothing from him apart from saying to him, "Increase for us the faith" (Lk. 17:5). He said to them, "If there were faith in you, even a mountain would change place from before you" (Mt. 17:20; Lk. 17:6). He said to them, "Do not doubt, or sink in the midst of the world, like Simon, who, when he doubted, began to sink in the midst of the sea" (Mt. 14:27-31). He said again as follows, "This shall be a sign for those who believe: they will speak

with new tongues and will cast out demons; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed” (Mk. 16:17-18).

18. Then, my beloved, let us come near to faith whose powers are so many.

For faith has caused to ascend to the heaven.

It overcame the flood.

It has made the barren to give birth.

It has delivered from the sword.

It has raised up from the pit.

It has made the poor rich.

It has released the prisoners.

It has redeemed the persecuted.

It has caused fire to come down.

It has divided the sea.

It has split open the rock and given water to drink to the thirsty.

It has satiated the hungry.

It has given life to the dead and brought them up from Sheol.

It has silenced the waves.

It has healed the sick.

It has conquered armies.

It has pulled down walls.

It has shut up the mouths of lions.

It has put out the flames of fire.

It has humbled the proud and brought honour to the humble (Heb. 11:33-39).

All these are the mighty works done by faith.

19. This is indeed the faith: that a man believes in God, the Lord of all, who made the heaven, the earth, the seas and all that is in them. He made Adam in His image. He gave the Law to Moses. He sent from His spirit upon the prophets, again He sent His Christ to the world. That a person should believe in the resurrection of the dead. Again he should also believe in the sacrament of baptism. This is the faith of the Church of God. A person should refrain from the observance of hours, Sabbaths, new moons, times, consultation of oracles, practice of augury, astrology and magic; from fornication, from music, from vain doctrines (which are) instruments of the evil one, from the flattery of sweet words, from blasphemy and from adultery. A man should not bear false witness and a man should not speak with double tongue. These are indeed the works of faith which is placed on the firm stone which is Christ, upon whom the whole building rises up.

20. My beloved, there is also much (narrated) in the Holy Books (about) the subject of faith. These few things I have written out of many to recall to your love so that you may know and make known (to others) that you should believe and (so) be believed. And when you have read and learned the works of faith you will be like that ploughed land on which the good seed fell and it gave fruits a hundred, sixty and thirtyfold (Mt. 13:8). When you will go to your Lord, he will call you good, diligent and faithful servant who, because of his abundant faith, has entered into the kingdom of his Lord (Mt. 25:21, 23).

The end of the Demonstration on Faith.

II

THE DEMONSTRATION ON CHARITY

The foundation of the Christian life is the double commandment, that is the love of God and of his neighbour (section 1). The Law and the prophets hang upon the double commandment which is fixed in the hearts and minds of the people. The Law and the prophets are not able to persuade a person who is not persuaded by the double commandment. The Law was not given to the righteous but to the wicked (1 Tim. 1:9) and it was an addition to the promise given to Abraham. It was the nurse and the guard until the arrival of Christ. Christ offered himself instead of the offerings which are in the Law; thus he fulfilled what the Law was lacking and the prophets were in need (section 6). The faith is confined in the Law and the true love is confirmed through faith (section 11). Jesus himself taught about unconditional love and unlimited forgiveness to one's brother (sections 12-13, 15). Then he presents 1 Cor. 13 in order to show the teaching of Paul about love (section 16). In sections 17-18 he demonstrates the examples for love from the Old Testament such as Moses, David, Elisha and Jeremiah. He introduces the teaching of Jesus about the excellence of love mainly through his sermon on the mount (section 19) and he concludes the Demonstration with a list of works which Jesus performed out of his love for mankind.

1. My beloved, with conviction, the whole Law and the prophets hang on the double commandments, as our Saviour said (Lk. 16:31), for the Law and the prophets are too weak to persuade one who is not persuaded (Lk. 16:31). Our Saviour said indeed that, "the Law and the prophets hang on these double commandments", that is, "A man should love the Lord, his God, with his whole soul and with his whole strength and with all his whole possessions, and then a man should also love his neighbour as himself" (Mt. 22:37, 39-40).

2. When you begin to investigate both these commandments, upon which hang the whole strength of the Law and of the prophets (you will see that) if indeed both these commandments, upon which hang the whole strength of the Law and of the prophets, had been fixed in the heart and mind of human beings, then it would not have been necessary for the Law and the prophets to have been written down, as it is written, "The Law is not given to the just, but to the wicked" (1 Tim. 1:9). And the Law was given because of the wicked. If justice had stayed among human beings, the Law would not have been required. Again if the Law had not been set down, the strength of God would not have been known in all generations through all the wonders which He manifested. Through the transgression of the Law by the house of Adam (Adam and Eve), death was decreed for the world; but the power of God will have been seen when all human beings arise at the end of the time, for the authority of death will be removed. Because of the wicked in the days of Noah, the power of God was seen in the waters of the flood. In the case of Abraham, because he kept justice which is in the Law, although the Law was not yet set down, the power of God was seen in him through justice, when he changed the captivity of Sodom

by the power of God (Gen. 14:22) and he did not stretch out his hand on the spoil (Gen. 14:23). God said to him after that day, "Your wage (will be) very great in your justice" (Gen. 15:1). He, for whom the Law had not been laid down, manifested the works of the Law, but the Law was not required for his justice. So also with his sons Isaac and Jacob, there was no need for them for the Law to be laid down for their justice, because their father ordered them that they should practice righteousness and (right) judgement as it is written that the Lord said about Abraham, "I know him that he will command his sons after him to keep all my commandments" (Gen. 18:19). And also Joseph kept the justice which is in the Law when he did not obey his master's wife. For he said, "How should I do this great evil and sin against God" (Gen. 39:9). And also Moses kept the justice which is in the Law when he refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh (Heb. 11:24). Because of this the Lord esteemed him worthy to give the Law to his people through him. For all these men manifested the works of the Law, while the Law was not laid down for their justice, but they were the Law for themselves (Rom. 4:14; Gal. 3:6-14).

3. When, however the time of the Law came, it was added on account of transgression (Gal. 3:19). And it (the Scripture) demonstrated that the Law is an addition. And why was there this addition? If not on account of the vocation of the Peoples which was promised before the Law (Gal. 3:8). The Law was the pedagogue and tutor until the Seed came through whom the Peoples were blessed came (Gal. 3:24). For the word of oath which was promised to Abraham is the covenant of promise in that God said to him, "In your seed all the Peoples will be blessed" (Gen. 18:18; 26:4; Gal. 3:8). And

this word is the covenant, 430 years before the Law-giving, which was promised to Abraham (Ex. 12:40; Gal. 3:17), namely that in his seed -which is Christ -they will be blessed. But the Law came into existence 430 years after these things. For, when Abraham received this promise he was eighty-five years old. From this time until Jacob entered into Egypt is 205 years. And from the time that Jacob entered into Egypt until the people went out through Moses is 225 years.

4. And the word was inscribed that the sojourn of the sons of Israel in the land of Egypt was 430 years. But why, my beloved, when they settled there 225 years, it was written 430 years? If not, because it was from the moment that He (God) said to Abraham, "You should indeed know that your seed shall be a settler in a land which does not belong to them. They shall work among them and forced to serve them for 400 years" (Gen. 15:13). For, at that time, when this word was spoken to Abraham, "There shall be a child for you" (Gen. 15:4) through faith, it (the word) was depicted in the heart of Abraham, as it is written, "Abraham believed in God and it was counted to him for justice" (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:13). And also the mention of the servitude, that his sons would be enslaved in Egypt, was conceived in the heart of Abraham. And he began to be anxious about how his seed would be in slavery and his heart was enslaved in Egypt. So also Isaac and Jacob thought about the slavery and their thought was enslaved in Egypt. The slavery of the seed of Abraham was promised to him before they were born: for the word (was uttered) 15 years before the birth of Isaac. And the promise of the slavery existed 205 years before their entrance into Egypt. And 430 years before the Law, the promise existed that in the seed of Abraham all the Peoples will be blessed (Gal. 3:17). The Law could

not cancel the promise, hence the Law was an addition to this word of promise until its time should come.

5. And this word was kept for 1794 years from the time that it was promised to Abraham and until it came. And this word was kept in reserve for 1304 years after the enactment of the Law. And the word existed 430 years before the Law and when it came it cancelled the observances of the Law. The Law and the prophets were contained in these two commandments about which our Lord said, "All the Law and the prophets until John the Baptist prophesied" (Mt. 11:13). And our Lord said, "I have not come to dismiss the Law and the prophets but to fulfill them" (Mt. 5:17). It is also written that, the truth of the Law was through Jesus (Jn. 1:17).

6. How indeed was the Law lacking and the prophets were in need to be fulfilled? If not, on account of the testament which was hidden in them, which itself is the word of promise. For, that testament was not sealed which was given to Moses till this latter testament came, which is the first, which was promised from above and was sealed down below. The one who brought the testament died and ratified both testaments (Heb. 9:16-18). "He made both into one and made obsolete the Law of the commandments through his commandments" (Eph. 2:14-16). For, the use of the Law became void for them by the coming of our Life-giver. And he offered himself instead of the offerings which are in the Law; and was led like a lamb (Isa. 53:7; Act. 8:32) for slaughter instead of the lambs of atonement. The fatted ox (Christ)⁶² was killed for us so that it is not needed for us to bring

62 In the early Syriac Church the title fatted ox (*Tawrā d-petmā*) was used to designate Christ. This is derived from Lk. 15:23. Aphr. uses this title besides in Dem. II:6, in Dems VI:6, VII:12 and in Ephrem, Eccl. XXXIII:4, Nat. IX:15 etc.

young oxen. He came and ascended on the cross so that offerings and sacrifices would not be required from us. He gave his blood for all people, so that the blood of the animals was not required for us. And he entered into the sanctuary which is not made by hands and became the priest and the holy minister (Heb. 9:11-12). For, from the time that he came, he made obsolete the observances in the Law and from the time that they bound him, the feasts were bound in chains (Ps. 118:27). He (God) caused to pass from them the judges because they wished to judge the innocent. Because they rejected his kingdom, he took from them the kingdom "for, the one to whom the kingdom belongs had come" (Gen. 49:10). And he offered 'a living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1) for us and made obsolete their sacrifices. And the sons of Israel sat without sacrifices, without altar, without putting on ephod and burning incenses (Hos. 3:4). He (God) abolished from them visions and prophets for they did not hear the Great Prophet.⁶³ The first testament was fulfilled in the last. Aged and antiquated are the works which are in the Law and they are for destruction. For, from the time the new was given, the old was made obsolete. It was not only from the time of the arrival of our Saviour, that the sacrifices were rejected, but also from before that time their sacrifices were not pleasing him as it is written, "I do not eat the flesh of calves and I do not drink the blood of goats; but offer to God thanksgiving and fulfill your vows to the Most High" (Ps. 50:13). And he also said that "God does not reject a broken heart" (Ps. 51:17). Again he said, "I have not delighted in sacrifices and also I am not pleased with whole burnt offerings" (Jer. 6:20; Ps. 51:16). "A humble spirit is the sacrifice of God" (Ps. 51:17). The prophet Isaiah also said, "That I do not require the

63 Apher. calls Jesus the Great Prophet in Dems IV:6, XIV:33 and XVII:11 other than here.

multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord" (Isa. 1:11). Again he said to them, "I hate and reject your feasts and I will not perceive the odour of your religious assembly" (Amos 5:21; Isa. 1:14).

7. And also this word which our Saviour said, on which the Law and the prophets hang, is beautiful, good and fair, because our Lord said as follows, "Not one letter, *yodh* will pass away from the Law and the prophets until all is fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18). For, he took the Law and the prophets and hang them on the two commandments, and cancelled nothing from them. But when you look well at this word, it is so in truth. The observance which is in the Law and everything which is written in it is under this word, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your heart" (Deut. 6:5; Mt. 22:37). Everything which was done in the Law was in order that they should be brought to love the Lord their God and that a person should love his neighbour in the flesh as himself. And these two commandments are above all the Law. When you set your heart and look in the Law, in the beginning of all the Law thus is it written, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. You shall not make for yourself together with me any image or any likeness" (Ex. 20:2, 4). When a man did not make another God with him, (he stands) under the word from which hang the Law and the prophets. Remember, my beloved, what I have written to you, that the Law is not set for the righteous (1 Tim. 1:9). For, whoever keeps righteousness is above the commandment, the Law and the prophets. And the word which our Lord said is true, "That no letter, *yodh* will pass away from the Law and from the prophets" (Mt. 5:18), because he set a seal and hang them on the two commandments.

8. However hear, my beloved, the explanation of this word. If somebody would say that "Why is this word written that the habitation of the sons of Israel in the land of Egypt was for 430 years, (but) when it was promised, this word was said to Abraham, that they should remain (there) for 400 years (Ex. 12:40), and (why) did they receive 30 years in addition?" However I will show to you, my beloved, how it is. For, when the time came, fulfilling 400 years, Moses was sent to deliver them. When he killed an Egyptian, they rejected their saviour and Moses fled to Midian. And (divine) anger was upon them so that they should remain in Egypt for 30 years. For they said to Moses "Who has appointed you a ruler and judge over us?" (Ex. 2:14). And when they rejected their saviour the anger of God rebuked them for 30 years in Egypt. Moses was in Midian for 30 years. Then, when oppression grew great upon them, he led them out from Egypt. God manifested this patience, first, so that they should be corrected because they rejected Moses; secondly, so that the iniquities of the Amorites should be completed. He added 30 years to the people beyond what he had promised to Abraham. He was patient with the Amorites for seventy years, 30 in Egypt, 40 in the desert, and when 430 (years) completed and (another) 40 years for the fullness of the iniquities of the Amorites, he brought them to the land of promise.

9. However, you should know, my beloved, that God exists without any Law. For at times he multiplies and subtracts, and at times he adds on to what is small. For, he promised in the days of Noah, on account of the wickedness of humanity that the days of the man should be 120 years. But he blotted them out in the six hundredth year of the life of Noah. For, he said, "They shall be on the earth for 120 years" (Gen. 6:3). But they were blotted

out in the six hundredth year of the living of Noah and he subtracted 20 years. And again it is written, When the iniquity of the sinful kingdom of the house of Ephraim increased, when Jeroboam, son of Nabat, ruled over them, who sinned and caused Israel to sin, and when they sinned, He (God) promised concerning them through the prophecy of prophet Isaiah, who said to them, "After 65 years Ephraim will fall from the people" (Isa. 7:8; 17:3). In the first year of Ahaz this word came to pass and in the fourth year of Hezekiah, Shalmaneser the king of Assyria went up against them and after him Tiglathpileser, and he led them into captivity from their land (2 Kgs 18:9f; 15:29; 1 Chr. 5:6, 26). Ahaz ruled over them for 16 years and in the fourth year of Hezekiah, the kings of Assyria had dominion over them. There are only 20 years and Ephraim fell from the people of Israel. And He (God) subtracted 45 years from them. What He had previously said and determined the time for He did not complete according to what He had decreed.

10. It was not like someone ignorant, that He promised concerning them that it thus will come to pass and then years were subtracted, and also added; rather, like someone having knowledge, He knew the measure of the coming (years). Because of His mercy He gave time for repentance in order that people should not have any excuse. But these people despised the patience of God. And when they heard that there is much time until the arrival of the promised wrath, they dared to sin before him, saying, "Everything which the prophets speak is prophesied for a remote time" (Ezek. 12:27). Therefore when this thought came to them in the days of prophet Ezekiel saying, "Everything which this man prophesies is for a remote time"; He (God) spoke to Ezekiel, "As I live, says the Lord of Lordships; there will be no more

delay for my words. For the word which I speak, I will accomplish quickly" (Ezek. 12:28). The fact that He decreed beforehand was to give time to the sons of man for repentance, so that perhaps they might repent. But they despised the patience of God and they did not repent. And He also caused the time which He set and decreed for them to prove false. He did not do (it) like someone ignorant; but as it is written, "Woe to the plunderer, you shall not plunder. The liar shall not act deceitfully among you. For when you wish to plunder, you will be plundered. When you wish to deceive, they shall be acting deceitfully against you" (Isa. 33:1). It is also written in Jeremiah, "If I speak against the people and against the kingdom to uproot and to destroy, and to overthrow and to bring to nought, and the people will return from its evil, then I also treat my word as false and turn from them everything which I spoke against them" (Jer. 18:7-8). Jeremiah again said, "If I speak concerning the people and concerning the kingdom to build and to plant, and that people perform before me wickedness, then I will treat my word as false and turn from (the people) the good which I spoke to be beneficial to it" (Jer. 18:9-10).

11. However all this which I have written to you, my beloved, is because earlier in that first *memr̥* I have demonstrated to you concerning the subject of faith, that in faith the foundation of this covenant in it we are standing firm is established. And in this second *memr̥* I wrote to you and I have reminded you that all the Law and the prophets hang on the two commandments, about which our Saviour said that in these two commandments the whole Law and the prophets are comprised. Faith is comprised in the Law and true love is established through faith - (the love) that exists from these two

commandments, namely that after loving the Lord, his God, a person loves his neighbour as himself.

12. Therefore hear my beloved about love which is from these two commandments. For, when our Life-giver came, he showed the exhortation of love. For he said to his disciples, "This is my commandment, that you should love one another" (Jn. 15:12). And he also said to them, "I give you a new commandment that you should love one another" (Jn. 13:34). Again when he demonstrated about love, he admonished them thus, "Love your enemies and bless the person who curses you, pray for those who do harm to you and persecute you" (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27-28). He said this also to them, "If you love him who loves you, what is your benefit? For, if you love him who loves you, the pagans also act in this way. He who loves them, they (also) love him" (Mt. 5:46). Our Life-giver also said, "If you do good to him who does good to you, what is your benefit? Behold the Tax-collectors and sinners also act in this way. But because you have been called the sons of God who is in heaven, you should be like him, who shows mercy and kindness to the ungrateful" (Lk. 6:35). Again our Saviour said, "Forgive and you will be forgiven, set free and you will be set free, give and you will be given" (Lk. 6:37-38). He again said and laid fear upon us, "If you do not forgive the people their transgressions, which they have transgressed against you, (then) the Father also will not forgive you" (Mt. 6:15). For he admonished thus and said, "If your brother acts wrongly against you, forgive him. Even if he acts wrongly against you seven times in a day, forgive him" (Lk. 17:4).

13. When Simon Peter heard this word, he said to our Lord, "How often should I forgive my brother, if he does wrong to me? Seven times?" Our Lord spoke to

him, "Not only seven times, but seventy times seven times. Even if he does wrong to you 490 times, forgive him in a single day" (Mt. 18:21-22). He resembled his good Father who has forgiven much to Jerusalem. When He led the sons of Israel into captivity to Babel, He punished them there for seventy years. When His mercy stirred He gathered them to their land through the scribe Esra and He multiplied His forgiveness towards them by a half of His day (Ps. 90:4), (namely) seventy weeks of years, 490 years. But when they shed innocent blood, He did not pardon Jerusalem; but He handed it over to the hands of its enemy and who uprooted it and left no stone upon stone in it, and left no foundation to the Lord. He did not speak to the sons of Edom that they should take vengeance because they did not cry against Jerusalem: "Raze (it) Raze (it) to its foundations" (Ps. 137:7; Ezek. 25:12-14). But God forgave by a half of His day, 490 years, and carried their sins. Then He uprooted and also handed Jerusalem in the hands of strangers; thus our Life-giver commanded them that man should in a day forgive his brother 490 times.

14. However, my beloved do not find difficulty with the word which I wrote to you that by a half of his day, God forgave Jerusalem. For thus written by David in the psalm ninety, "A thousand years in the eyes of the Lord are like yesterday which has passed" (Ps. 90:4). Our wise masters also speak thus, "As in six days the world was constituted by God, after the completion of six thousand years, the world will be dissolved; then there will be the Sabbath of God, like the Sabbath that is after six days", as our Saviour clearly showed about the Sabbath. For he said thus, "Pray that your flight not be in winter or in the Sabbath" (Mt. 24:20). The Apostle also said, "The Sabbath of God still stands" (Heb. 4:9). "Again let us be diligent that we may enter into his rest" (Heb. 4:11).

15. Again when our Lord taught the prayer to his disciples, he said to them, "You should pray thus, forgive us our debts, so also we should forgive to our debtors" (Mt. 6:12). Again he said, "When you wish to bring an offering, and you remember that you are having some grudge against your brother, leave your offering before the altar and go, and be reconciled with your brother and then come to offer your oblation" (Mt. 5:23-24); lest when somebody prays "forgive us our debts so also we will forgive to our debtors", he is caught by his own mouth and he is told by him who receives the prayers, "You do not forgive your debtor, how then will you be forgiven? And as a result your prayer will remain on the earth".⁶⁴ Again our Lord showed us the example of that man who began to take a reckoning from his servants and when there approached before him a servant of his who was 10000 talents in debt to him; and when his master pressed him that he should give him what he owed him, and when he could not repay his debt to his master, his master commanded and released him and all that he owed he forgave him. But that servant in his evilness did not remember the forgiveness of his master, how much he had forgiven him. And that (servant) when he went out, found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii and he took hold of him and was strangling him and saying to him, "Give me what you owe me". And he did not accept the request of his fellow servant who sought from him, but he went (and) shut him up in the prison. And because he did not forgive his fellow servant the little, when so much had been forgiven him, he was handed over to the guards that they should scourge him until he should give what he owed. And he said to them, "So will my Father who is in heaven do to you if you do not each forgive his brother" (Mt. 18: 23-35).

64 He expresses the same idea in Dem. IV:13.

16. On the other hand, look my beloved how great the blessed Apostle magnifies love, when he said, "If you are zealous for great gifts, I will show to you again what is the excellent gift" (1 Cor. 12:31). He said, "If I have in me the prophecy, and I understand all the mysteries, and all knowledge and all faith so that I remove a mountain but I have in me no love, I have not gained anything. If I give all that is belonging to me to feed the poor, and even I hand over my body to be burned but I have no love in me, again I have not gained anything" (1 Cor. 13:2-3). For he said thus, "Love is patient and kind, and it does not envy, so also love does not boast or glorify itself. It does not seek anything that is pleasing only itself, but that which is advantageous to many. Love hopes all, bears all, love never falls" (1 Cor. 13:4-8). He again said, "Love is greater than all things" (1 Cor. 13:13). The Apostle showed clearly that after faith, love is excellent; on it a firm edifice is erected; he showed that the prophecy is established in love and the mysteries are revealed in love; the knowledge is completed in love and faith is confirmed in love. Somebody who has faith removes a mountain, however, there is no gain without love. And if a man gives to the poor all that he has, and his alms are not given in love, then it is not advantageous to him. Even if he burns his body in fire on account of the name of his Lord, he is not beneficial in anything. He showed again patience, self-control, kindness, and no grudge against a brother; these things are found in the fulness of love. So also self-control, humility and sociability are strengthened in love. For faith is laid on the stone of the building. But love is the beam by which the walls of the building are fastened. If a defect is found in the beam of the building, the whole building will fall down. So also when a division is found in the love, the whole faith will fall down. Faith cannot remove dispute and jealousy, until the coming of the love of Christ; so also a building cannot go up well until the beams are fastened through the walls.

17. Again I will show to you my beloved, that love is more excellent than everything and the upright of old were perfected by it. For (Scripture) shows about Moses, who gave himself to the sons of his people and was willing to be blotted out from the book of life, provided only that the people should not be effaced (Ex. 32:31-33). And also when they rose against him to stone him (Num. 14:10), he offered an intercession for them before God, so that they might be saved.

David also showed a demonstration of love when he was persecuted by Saul who was always ensnaring his life to kill him, but David showed compassion with abundant love to Saul, his enemy (who) sought to kill him. He was delivered up twice into the hands of David (1 Sam. 24:4-23; 26:7-25), but he did not kill him; instead, he repaid good for evil. Therefore this goodness did not depart from his house; because he forgave, it was forgiven him. But Saul repaid evil for good, evil did not depart from his house. He called God, but He did not respond to him, and he fell by the sword of the Philistines. But David wept bitterly about him (2 Sam. 1:17) and David fulfilled beforehand the commandment of our Saviour who said that, "Love your enemies" (Lk. 6:35), "Forgive and it will be forgiven to you" (Lk. 6:37). Thus David loved and was loved; he forgave and was forgiven to him.

18. Elisha also showed this love, when his enemies came against him to seize him and to harm him (2 Kgs 6:13-23). But he treated them well and set before them bread and water, and dismissed them from him in peace. (Thus) he fulfilled the word, which is written, "If your enemy hungers, give him to eat; if he thirsts, give him to drink" (Prov. 25:21; Rom. 12:20). The prophet Jeremiah also prayed before God for them who brought him into captivity in the pit, and continually tortured him (Jer.

38:20). Our Saviour taught us this example of the ancients, that we should love our enemies and to pray for those who hate us (Mt. 5:44). If he commanded us to love our enemies and should pray for those who hate us, behold what excuse in the day of judgement is there for us, who hate our brothers and our members? For, we are from the body of Christ and members from his members (1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5). For he who hates one of the members of Christ, will be cut off from his whole body. And whoever hates his brother will be separated from the sons of God.

19. And what our Saviour taught us showed the diligence of love. For, first he accomplished it in himself and then he taught his hearers. And he reconciled our enmity with his Father because he loved us. He handed over his innocence for the debtors. The Good one suffered dishonour for the evil ones. The Rich one became poor for us. The Living one died for the dead. Through his death he restored life to our mortality. The Son of the Lord of all took the likeness of a slave on account of us (Phil. 2:7). He to whom all is subjected, enslaved himself in order to liberate us from the slavery of sin.

In his great love he called blessed the poor in their spirit (Mt. 5:3).

He promised to the peace-makers that they would be brothers to him and be called the sons of God (Mt. 5:9).

He promised to the humble that they will inherit the land of life (Mt. 5:5).

He promised to the mourners that they will be supplicated.

He promised to the hungry, plenty in his kingdom (Mt. 5:6).

He made glad those who weep through his promise (Lk. 6:21).

He promised to the merciful that they will have mercy (Mt. 5:7).

He said to those who are pure in their heart that they will see God (Mt. 5:8).

He also promised to those who are persecuted on account of righteousness, that they will enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:10).

He promised for those who are persecuted on account of his name, blessedness and rest in his kingdom (Mt. 5:11-12; Lk. 6:22).

He changed our nature of dust and made us the salt of truth (Mt. 5:13)⁶⁵ and set us free from being food for the snake.

He called us the light of the world (Mt. 5:14) so that he might set us free from the dominion of death.

He made us good instead of bad, virtuous instead of loath-some.

He gave us love instead of hatred.

He made us to partake with the good man, who brings out good things from his treasures and set us free from him who brings out evil from the superfluity of his heart (Lk. 6:45).

20. He healed the wounds of the sick because of his abundant love; indeed he also healed the son of the centurion on account of his faith (Mt. 8:13). He stilled from us the storms of the sea through his power (Lk. 8:24). He banished from us the demons of legions on account of his grace (Lk. 8:32). He gave life to the daughter of the chief of the synagogue through his compassion (Lk. 8:55).

⁶⁵ The salt has got a medicinal function and it is the understanding that the serpents will not eat salt.

Again he cleansed the woman from the uncleanness of blood (Mk. 5:29). He opened the eyes of the two blind men who approached him (Mt. 9:30). He also gave to his twelve the strength and authority over all pain and sickness and also to us through their hands (Lk. 9:1). He hold us back from the way of pagans and Samaritans (Mt. 10:5). He gave us strength through his compassion so that we should not fear when they bring us before the rulers of the world (Mt. 10:17-20). He cast division in the world because of his great peace (Lk. 12:51). He forgave the many debts of the sinful woman because of his mercy (Lk. 7:67). He made us worthy on account of his grace that we may build the tower at his cost (Lk. 14:28). He cast out unclean spirits from us and made us dwelling for his divinity (Mt. 12:43; Lk. 8:2, 11:24). He sowed in us the good seed so that we might bring forth fruits a hundredfold, sixty and thirty (Mt. 13:8, 23). He was placed in the world like a treasure which is laid in a field (Mt. 13:44). He showed the power of his majesty when he was cast down from the height to the depth, but he was not injured (Lk. 4:29-30). He satiated the hungry who are exhausted, five thousand men besides children and women, with five breads and two fishes (Mt. 14:21). Thus he showed the greatness of his glory. He heard the Canaanite woman and raised her daughter from her sickness because of his great love (Mt. 15:28). By the power of the one who sent him, he made the tongue of the dumb man to speak, whose ear was dull (Mk. 7:32-37). The blind saw his light and they praised through him, the one who sent him (Mt. 9:27-31; 15:31). When he went up on the mountain in order to pray, the rays of the sun was overpowered by his light (Mt. 17:2). He made known his abundant power through that youth upon him that the (evil) spirit affected. He expelled the demon of lunacy by his word (Mt. 17:18). He gave an example and

a type to us so that we should be in the likeness of children and so we should enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 18:3). He spoke and demonstrated about the little ones, that no man should despise them, because their angels always see the Father who is in heaven (Mt. 18:10). He demonstrated again his perfect healing art in that man who was sick for 38 years; he multiplied his compassion to him and healed him (Jn. 5:5). Again he gave to us the commandment that we should leave the world and should turn to him (Mk. 8:34-36). He revealed to us that whoever loves the world cannot be pleasing to God, through the example of the rich man who placed his confidence in his possessions (Lk. 12:16-21), and by (the case of) that man who delighted in his goods and ended up in Sheol. He asked for water on the tip of his (Lazarus) little finger (Lk. 16:24)⁶⁶ but no man gave to him (Lk. 15:16). He has hired us as workers to toil in his vineyard who is the true vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16).⁶⁷ All these our Life-giver has done for us on account of his abundant love. Let us also, my beloved, be partakers in the love of Christ when we love one another and fulfil these two commandments upon which hang all the Law and the prophets

The end of the Demonstration on Charity.

66 The phrase “the tip of his little finger” used by Aphr. is not found in SC P; instead they simply say “the tip of his finger”. Ephrem also uses the phrase “the tip of the little finger”, cf. Haer. XIII:2, Eccl. III:7, Hypat. I, Overb., p.54, line 7 and *Sermo* I:iii:223. But in Haer. XLIX:2 he has “the tip of the finger”.

67 For a detailed study on this topic refer to R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 95 ff.

III

THE DEMONSTRATION ON FASTING

Fasting is not only abstaining from food and drink but also any kind of sacrifice is a fast; if anybody observes a fast from evil things, it is better and excellent than the fasting from bread and water. In sections 2-3 he presents the actions of the patriarchs of the Old Testament and in section 7 the fasting of Ninevites as types for pure fasting. The purity of the heart is the necessary requirement for pure fasting and which can even change the anger of God as in the case of Moses; only such fasting is accepted before God. In section 9 he compares the fasting of the heretics such as Marcion, Mani and Valentine; there is nobody to reward for their fasting. In the second part of the Demonstration he deals with the fasting of Mordecai, Esther and Daniel. Haman was overthrown from his greatness by means of the fasting of Mordecai and Esther. Daniel through his fasting changed the captivity of his people to the fullness of seventy years. He concludes the Demonstration by saying that we should fast and keep vigil so that we will come to the rest of Christ through the power of pure fasting.

1. Pure fast is excellent before God and is guarded as a treasure in heaven. And it is a weapon against the evil one and a shield intercepting the arrows of the enemy (Eph. 6:16). And I have not said this according to my way of thinking, but according to the Holy Books which

have shown us beforehand that the fasting was a helper in all times for those who have fasted truly. For fast, my beloved, was not only this (abstaining) from bread and water, but many are the observances of fasting.

For there is he who fasts from bread and water until he will hunger and thirst.

And there is he who fasts to remain in virginity, who hungers but does not eat; who thirsts but does not drink; and this fast is more excellent.

And he who fasts in holiness (sexual abstinence)⁶⁸ and it is (also) fasting.

And there is he who fasts from flesh, wine and various foods.

And there is he who fasts to put up a barrier to his mouth so that he will not speak hateful words.

And there is he who fasts from anger and controls his inclination so that he is not vanquished (by anger).

And there is he who fasts from possessions so that he may empty himself for his work.

And there is he who fasts from various kinds of mattresses so that he will be vigilant in prayer.

And there is he who, in affliction, fasts from the things of this world so that he will not be injured by the enemy.

And there is he who fasts that he may mourn,⁶⁹ so that he may be pleasing in the affliction, to his Lord.

68 Aphr. uses term *qaddiṣutā* to denote holiness as well as sexual abstinence.

69 *Abilā* is derived from the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:4). This term denotes the anchorite, monk and nun; cf. J. Payne Smith (ed.), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 2. They are mourning not only for their own sins but also for the sins of the mankind. This mourning is a mourning for, and for participating in, the sufferings of Christ.

And there is he who gathers all these things together and makes these a single fast.

As in the case of someone who fasts from nourishment until he becomes hungry- once he has fasted from eating and from drinking, he is called an abstainer, but if he takes a little food and drink, he breaks his fast: - so a man who fasts from all these things, and if he breaks at times one of these things, again his fast will no longer be reckoned for him. Whoever breaks one of these things, his fast will not be counted, as in the case of the one who eats and drinks greedily. And he who as a result of his hunger happens to break his fast, his sin is not great; but one who abstained from these things and has proceeded to break one or other of these things, his sin is great and not small.⁷⁰

2. However, hear, my beloved, the Demonstration of pure fast.

For, first of all, Abel showed the pure fast through his offering,

And Enoch (Gen. 5:24) by well-pleasing before his God,
And Noah who kept his innocence in a corrupt generation (Gen. 6:5),

And Abraham by excelling in his faith,

And Isaac because of the covenant of Abraham,

And Jacob because of the oath of Isaac, because he knew God (Gen. 32:30),

And Joseph because of his compassion and his stewardship.

70 Here he may have in mind those Christians especially the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant (*Benā y Qyā mā* and *Benā t Qyā mā*) who have taken upon themselves the yoke of the saints and Christ.

The purity of all these was a perfect fast for them before God. And if there is no purity of heart fasting is not accepted. Remember and see, my beloved, what a great thing it is, if someone purifies his heart, keeps his tongue and restrains his hands from evil, like those men whom I have described to you above. However it is not fitting for a man to mix honey with wormwood (Prov. 5:3-4). Indeed, if a man fast from bread and water, he should not mix with his fast abuses and curses. For, there is only one door for your house, which is the temple of God. O man, it is not fitting for you that the door through which the king comes in it, that goes out from it excrement and filth. For, if a person abstains from all these hateful things and receives the body and blood of Christ, he should take care of his mouth through which the Son of the King comes in. You have no authority, o man, to bring forth foul language from your mouth. Hear the things that our Life-giver said, "It is not the things which come into a man that defile him, but is the things which go out from his mouth, these defile him" (Mt. 15:11).

3. For Moses also observed a pure fast when he went up to the mountain and brought the Law to the people. He grew strong through his forty days fast (Ex. 24:18, 34:28) and received especial glory when the skin of his face became resplendent (Ex. 34:29) and he turned back the anger (of God) from his people and they were not blotted out (Ex. 32:11, 34:9). Like the fast of Moses, Elijah the mighty man also fasted, when he was persecuted by Jezebel and travelled to Horeb with his forty days' fast (1 Kgs. 19:8), to the place where (God) spoke with Moses; there (God) was revealed to him, commanding him and saying to him, "Go and anoint Jehu, the son of Jamshi and Hazael so that he may take revenge on the sons of Israel; and (anoint also) Elisha the son of

Shaphat, so that he may take your place “ (1 Kgs 19:15-16). He rejoiced over the revelation of his Lord in his perfect fast, just as Moses rejoiced when he fasted twice forty days and averted the anger of God from his people, bringing down the tables of the covenant which were engraved by the finger of God. In the case of these two, their (source of) pride was in their fast, and by it they were perfected.

4. Now I will show to you also a fast of iniquity and of bloodshed which was not accepted, which Jezebel the instigator/ provoker of Ahab and the subverter of Israel decreed. For she wrote a letter in the name of Ahab and sent it to the men of Jezreel, wicked men (who were), obedient to the wicked Jezebel. She wrote and said in that wicked letter as follows, “Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; and seat opposite him two men, the sons of wickedness, and let them testify against him and say, ‘Naboth has reviled God and the king’, then let him be stoned to death” (1 Kgs 21:9-10). My beloved this is what Jezebel wrote to them, that two men should bear witness against Naboth, as though it was on the basis of the Holy Law, she sent them (the letter); for it is written in the Law that “One who is condemned to death should not be killed according to the mouth of only one witness, but he should die according to the mouth of two witnesses” (Deut. 17:6, 19:15). Thus it is written that “The hand of the witnesses against him should first stone him, then at the end the hand of the whole people” (Deut. 17:7). She wrote furthermore to them that they should witness against him as follows: Naboth has reviled God and the king. And this is too she wrote to them in the letter of wickedness as though (coming) from the Holy Law. For it is written, “He who blasphemes the name of God shall

be stoned, because he has singled out the holy name and blasphemed (it)" (Lev. 24:16). But Jezebel herself was not concerned about the name of God, being reviled; rather she herself was concerned with the covetousness of Ahab, who desired the vineyard of Naboth. Ahab did not remember what was written; "Thou shalt not desire anything that belongs to your neighbour" (Ex. 20:17).

5. O Jezebel, the subverter of Ahab, where is this God whom Naboth reviled - whose altar you have overthrown or whose prophets you have killed? (1 Kgs. 19:14) Or which king has he reviled? The one who abolished the Law and wanted to snatch the inheritance of Naboth? But why, Jezebel, you have not upheld the thing that is written in the beginning of the commandments of the Law, where it is written, "You shall worship no other God" (Ex. 20:5). But you, Jezebel, you are worshipping Baal. Again it is written, "You shall not shed innocent blood in the land which the Lord your God has given to you" (Deut. 19:10). O Jezebel, it was fitting for you to remember what is written, "The land upon which blood is spilt is not expiated except by the spilling of the blood of him who shed it" (Num. 35:33). Then, O Jezebel, have you feared this and so been moved by wicked jealousy because Naboth reviled God, when he had not reviled (Him)? Again it is written, "Whoever has shed the blood of a man, his own blood will be shed" (Gen. 9:6). Jezebel shed the innocent blood of Naboth, provoking (God) to Anger. Because of this, in that place where the innocent blood was shed during the ordered fast of wickedness, the blood of Jezebel was shed (1 Kgs. 21:19) and the dogs devoured it. And Ahab who heard her advice, his blood dogs licked there (1 Kgs 22:38).

6. If Jezebel chose and took from the Law what was helpful to her (but which turned out) for her injury,

in that she was not keeping the Law; you wicked men, men of Jezreel, how did you accept the letter in which was written a fast of wickedness, and in which was written the witness of falsehood and bloodshed? In which generations have you heard of the observance of fast and the shedding of innocent blood? But why did you not refuse the letter of wickedness and false testimony? Because of this Ahab and Jezebel received just judgement for the innocent blood of Naboth which they shed. And the men of Jezreel who listened to Jezebel were also rewarded with just judgement. For Hosea prophesies saying, "Yet a little while I require the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (Hos. 1:4). Jehu demanded the blood of Naboth from the hands of Jezebel and the house of Ahab, and he slaughtered the men of Jezreel in the house of Baal. The blood of Naboth came upon them; as Jehu had said in that day of retribution, "At the evening I have seen the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons" (2 Kgs. 9:26). Retribution happened to him, the fast which the men of Jezreel observed was for (their) condemnation.

7. Again the sons of Nineveh observed a pure fast, when Jonah preached to them the overthrow (of Nineveh). Thus it is written indeed, "When they heard the preaching of Jonah, they ordered a continuous fast and an urgent supplication as they sat on sackcloth and ashes. They put on sackcloth instead of their luxurious clothes; children were withheld from the breasts of their mothers; sheep and cattle from pasture". For thus it is written, "That the word reached the king of Nineveh; he rose from his throne, took off his crown and sat on sackcloth and humbled himself in ashes". He proclaimed by a messenger in Nineveh, his city, saying, "According to the order of the king and of his princes, human beings and animals should not eat anything, neither should they

pasture (their animals), nor drink water. But human beings and animals should be covered with sackcloth, and cry with groaning to God. Let him turn away the anger and fury from us so that we may not perish" (Jon. 3:7-9). Therefore it is written, "That God saw their deeds, that they repented of their evil ways; he averted from them the anger and did not destroy them" (Jon. 3:10). He did not say, "He (God) saw the fast from bread and water with sackcloth and ashes, but that they repented of their evil ways and of their wicked deeds". Because of this the king of Nineveh proclaimed, saying that, "Everyone should turn away from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands" (Jon. 3:8). The fast was pure; the fast which the Ninevites observed was accepted, when they returned from their evil ways and from plundering which is in their hands. The pure fast which the Ninevites observed was well pleasing. Their fast was not like that of the men of Jezreel who shed innocent blood during it.

8. For, at all times, my beloved, it is excellent if somebody observes a fast from evil things and it is better than a fast from bread and water; it is better than 'if somebody humbles himself and bends his neck like a hook, and humbles himself with sackcloth and ashes' (Isa. 58:5) as Isaiah said. For if someone observes a fast from bread and water, and from all nourishments, and humbles himself in sackcloth and ashes, and mourns, this is something pleasing, right and honourable. But if somebody humbles himself, unfastens the knot of wickedness, cuts off the bonds of deceit it is all the more pleasing (Isa. 58:6). Then his light is opened up as the sun, his justice goes before him, he becomes like an exulting Paradise, like a spring of water whose water never fails (Isa.

58:6, 8, 10). And he is not like the hypocrites who make their faces gloomy, their appearances hateful as they make known their fast (Mt. 6:16).

9. For behold also, the (supporters of) deceitful doctrines, the instruments of the Evil One fast and call to mind their sins. There is no reward for them. For who will give a reward to Marcion who did not acknowledge the Good One, the Maker? Again who will reward Valentine for his fast, who proclaimed that his makers are many, saying that a perfect God has not been spoken with the mouth and no mind has ever investigated him? But who will give reward to the sons of darkness, (the followers of) the doctrine of wicked Mani, who dwell in the darkness like snakes, and practice the Chaldean art, the doctrine of Babel? Behold all these people fast but their fast is not accepted.

10. On the other hand, hear, my beloved, I will show to you an acceptable fast which Mordecai and Esther observed (Est. 4:6). Their fast was a shield of redemption to all the sons of their people. They annihilated the vain glory of their troubler, Haman. His iniquity turned back on his own head; his deceitful plan turned back against him. With the judgement with which he wished to judge, he was judged, and with the measure with which he wished to measure, he himself was measured (Mt. 7:2), and as he thought to do, it was done to him. He is bound with the rope of his own sins. The riches which he boasted did not accompany him, his wisdom did not save him; because he made artful attempts to evil, his pride was brought low, his glory passed on from him; his beauty was destroyed, his might was humbled. With the blow with which he wished to strike he himself was struck down; with the murder with which he wished to kill, he was killed, because he wished

to destroy all the Jews who were under the authority of the king Akhshirash. The fast of Mordecai and Esther became the shield and opposed the arrows of Haman. Haman was caught through his iniquity, his destroying sword entered into his own heart and his bow which was drawn to iniquity was broken. As it is written against the wicked, "Their sword shall enter into their heart and their bows shall be broken" (Ps. 37:15). This was fulfilled against Haman, for when he erected the cross for Mordecai and for his sons, Haman himself was hung upon it with his sons (Est. 7:9-10). He was caught in the pit which he had prepared, and was captured in the snare which he had hidden; his net was spread against him and he fell through the snares of iniquity and his end was for ever.

11. But why, my beloved, did Haman ask and seek from the king that all the Jews be destroyed, if not to avenge the sons of his people, wishing to take vengeance and to blot out the name of the sons of Israel, as the remembrance of Amalek had been blotted out from under the heaven? Haman was the left over survivor of the Amalekites. It is written indeed as follows, that while Haman, the son of Hammadatha, the Agagite (Est. 3:1) was held in honour in the palace of the king Akhshirash, Mordecai was sitting at the court of the king every day because of his foster- child Esther (Est. 2:21), who had been taken off and was pleasing to the king Akhshirash, more than all the young woman, her companions; she entered and sat in the place of the queen Vashti. Mordecai was sitting every day early at the court of the king. Haman was third after the king and he was honoured in all his kingdom. Everyone who was at the court of the king when he saw Haman, he would fall down and bow before him (Est. 3:2), but Mordecai did not stand up before him. Therefore he (Haman) wished for this reason to avenge

the sons of his people and to exact satisfaction for the Amalekites (Est. 3:6). For Haman was from the race of the house of Agag, the king of Amalekites, whom Saul had brought and Samuel had torn to pieces before the Lord (1 Sam. 15:33). But Mordecai was from the lineage of the house of Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, from the sons of Kish (Est. 2:5). Because Saul had killed the Amalekites, Haman wished to take vengeance for the sons of his people from the hands of Israel and from the hands of Mordecai for the murder of Agag. The insane man did not know that this was already decreed against Amalek, that his memory will be blotted out from under the heaven. For it is written in the Holy Law, "God said to Moses, Say to Joshua, the son of Nun, that he should choose for himself men and wage a war against Amalek" (Ex. 17:9). Joshua equipped himself and waged war against Amalek and Amalek was overpowered by the sign of the cross, by the stretching out of the hands of Moses. When those (Amalekites) who went out to battle were killed, a remnant from them was left over at their home. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write a record of remembrance and place (it) before Joshua, the son of Nun. For I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven" (Ex. 17:14). (God) was patient with the Amalekites, in case they might listen to what is written in the Holy Book of God saying, "I will utterly blot out the Amalekites" (Ex. 17:14), and (as a result) would return to Him, and He would turn to them. For if they had repented, the repentance would have been like the repentance of Ninevites (Jon. 3:10), when He (God) promised concerning them (their) overthrow, but they showed repentance and He averted His anger from them; and as in the case of the Gibeonites (Jos. 9:16-26) a promise was given them, and they did not perish together with the Canaanites; and as in case of Rahab who believed

(Heb. 11:31) and repented, so repentance would have been granted to Amalekites if they had believed when (God) was patient to them for 400 years (Gen. 15:13-16). But after all this period, when He saw that they did not repent, His anger prevailed over them and He recalled everything that Moses had inscribed in his Holy Book. For when Saul took up the kingdom, God said to Samuel, Say to him, "I remember what Amalek has done to you, when you went out from Egypt, he encountered you with a sword. Now go and destroy the sinful Amalek" (1 Sam. 15:2-3). Saul went and destroyed the Amalekites. But because Saul had mercy upon Amalek, he was rejected from his royal dignity because he had left a remnant from them (1 Sam. 15:10-23). Haman was that remnant of the house of Agag, whom Saul had left. Mordecai was from the race of the house of Saul, he who had destroyed the house of Agag.

12. There are people, my beloved, who bring blame on Mordecai saying "Why he did not stand up before Haman, who was honoured in the whole kingdom?" What harm would he have, if he had given him the honour? (Est. 3:2). They say thus, "If Mordecai had stood up before Haman, he would not have plotted this evil against Mordecai and against the sons of his people". But a person who says these things does not know the force of the word: Now Mordecai did this as a righteous man who observed the Law. He did not stand up before the wicked Haman because he gave heed to Saul his ancestor who, because he had mercy upon king Agag, the ancestor of Haman, was rejected from his royal dignity and the anger (of God) was upon him. Also in the case of Mordecai, (if he had) showed honour to wicked Haman the anger (of God) would have ascended on him as in the case of Saul.

13. But why, my beloved, did Amalek go out to fight a war against Israel more than all the other peoples? For Amalek thought as follows, "We should go out and kill the sons of Jacob and destroy the blessings of Isaac". For he (Amalek) feared servitude to the sons of Jacob. For Isaac said to Esau thus, "You shall serve Jacob, your brother; but if you repent, his yoke shall pass away from your neck" (Gen. 27:40). Because of this you should know that Amalek was the son of the concubine Eliphaz, the son of Esau (Gen. 36:12), and he did not want to be enslaved to the sons of Jacob. But why, my beloved, did Isaac say to Esau, "You shall serve Jacob, your brother?" For the word (of the Bible) points out thus: because Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan, who was cursed by Noah, his father. For Noah said to him thus, "You shall be a servant of the servants to your brothers" (Gen. 9:25). Because Abraham and Isaac knew that the Canaanites were cursed, they did not take from their daughters (as wives) for their sons; for, Abraham did not take (one) for Isaac, nor Isaac for Jacob, so that the accursed seed of Canaanites should not be mixed with the seed of Shem, who was blessed by Noah. Because of this Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, wished to make void the curses of Noah and the blessings of Isaac, and to fight with the sons of Jacob. God also rightly wrote against Amalek that his memory will be blotted out through the sons of Rachel (Deut. 25:19). At first Joshua, the son of Nun from the tribe of Joseph fought, with him; afterwards Saul from the sons of Benjamin; Mordecai destroyed their remnant through his fast. From all the sons of Esau only Amalek wished to fight with the sons of Jacob and it is his memory that will be blotted out. See that Haman was overthrown from his greatness through the fast of Mordecai and Esther, and the remnant of Amalekites

came to an end. Mordecai received the honourable (place) of Haman and was of high rank in all the kingdom of Akhshirash, and Esther became the queen in the place of Vashti.

14 Daniel also observed an acceptable fast of three weeks for his people (Dan. 9:1-3), so that they should remain in Babel no more longer than seventy years. Through his twenty-one days' fast he was heard before his God (Dan. 9:20-23). And during those same days Gabriel stood for his help, for he was always accepting prayers; Michael their prince (Dan. 10:21) also helped together with Gabriel. They stood against the prince of Persia for twenty-one days (Dan. 10:13). He (Gabriel) helped Daniel in his fast. Now you should know, my beloved, that Gabriel accepts prayers before God. For when Daniel prayed, Gabriel came to him, strengthened him and said to him, "Your prayer is heard before God and I have come here because of your words" (Dan. 10:12). He encouraged him and said to him, "Be strengthened, man of desire" (Dan. 10:11, 19). He again came to him in the prayer during his fast. Gabriel brought also the prayer of Zechariah before God (Lk. 1:11). When he announced the birth of John, he said to him, "Your prayer is heard before God" (Lk. 1:13). He brought also the prayer of Mary before God and announced the birth of Christ, for he said to her, "You have found favour before God" (Lk. 1:30). By what did Mary find favour, if not through her fasting and her prayer? For Gabriel was accepting pure prayers and brought them before God.⁷¹ Michael was the prince of the sons of Israel. About him He (God) said to Moses

⁷¹ Aphr. deals this aspect in a more detailed way in Dem. IV on Prayer.

“Behold my angel⁷² will walk before you and will destroy the inhabitants of the land before you” (Ex. 23:20, 23). He is the one who was seen by the ass of Balaam when Balaam went to curse Israel (Num. 22:22-35). Again it was he who was seen by Joshua, the son of Nun, with his drawn sword standing in the valley of Jericho. When Joshua saw him, he thought that he was from the enemies, and (so) Joshua spoke to him, “Are you from us or from our enemies?” Michael said to him, “I am the chief of the companies of the Lord and I have now come” (Jos. 5:13-14). He threw down the walls of Jericho before Joshua, the son of Nun (Jos. 6:20; Heb. 11:30). Again he destroyed before him thirty-one kings (Jos. 12:7-24). He destroyed a thousand times a thousand Ethiopians before Asa (2 Chr. 14:12). Again he slew 185000 in the camp of the Assyrian (2 Kgs. 19:35). Also when the sons of Israel went off to Babylon, he also went with them and fought for them.

15. But why, my beloved, did Daniel fast these three weeks, supplicating and praying to God, and it is not written that he fasted before (this) time? For it is written thus, When the seventy years for the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled, as the prophet Jeremiah had said (Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10), he offered his prayer and supplication before his God that they should not remain any longer than these seventy years (Dan. 9:2), in that (God) had shortened (the time from) the generation in the days of Noah, in that He had increased (it) for the sons of Israel in Egypt, and in that He had shortened for

72 Aphr. prefers the term *'ire* 'Watchers' to denote the angels rather than *mal'ake* 'Messengers'. Watchfulness represents holiness and its opposite, sleep, stands for sin and death. Refer also W. Cramer, *Die Engelvorstellungen bei Ephräm der Syrer*, OCA 173 (Rome, 1965), 165-181.

the sons of Ephraim. Daniel thought that because of the people's sins, it might have to remain more than these seventy years that Jeremiah had said. Gabriel and Michael their prince helped in his fast. Also Michael himself would have rest along with them when they returned to their land; likewise Gabriel who had helped his people so that the fruits of their prayers would multiply in the sanctuary and the offerings would multiply which he brought everyday before God. The prince of Persian kingdom did not wish that the holy seed of Israel be separated from the sinful kingdom of Persia, which had been delivered to him from God. Because as long as they were there, they were righteous among them, he also rejoiced in them. See, how the chosen fast of Daniel was made to abound, and turned back the captivity of his people after the fullness of seventy years.

16. But the leader of our camp is greater than Gabriel, more excellent than Michael, and stronger than the prince of Persia. He is our Life-giver and our Lord Jesus Christ, who came and put on our human nature. He suffered and was tempted in the body which he took from us; he can help those who are tempted (Heb. 2:18, 4:15). He fasted indeed for us and conquered our adversary, and commanded us that we should fast and keep vigil always (Mt. 26:41) so that we will come to his rest through the power of pure fasting.

The end of the Demonstration on Fasting

IV

THE DEMONSTRATION ON PRAYER

This Demonstration is filled with biblical examples. Purity of heart is an essential condition for prayer. The prayer from the pure heart is a pure offering or a sacrifice. Aphrahat depicts by means of biblical examples that such prayer performs miracles (sections 1, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 18). The fire descending from heaven touches those sacrifices which are acceptable before God, and on the other hand the fire does not touch those sacrifices which are rejected by God (sections 2-3). He deals with the prayer of Jacob in sections 5 and 6 and says that many symbols are hidden in the vision of Jacob. The prayer should take place in the inner chamber, that is in the heart (section 10). In the interpretation of "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt. 18:20), he says when a man sweeps clean his soul, Christ dwells in the man and God dwells in Christ, and that person becomes one of the three. He illustrates it through the examples of our righteous ancestors who prayed and whose prayers were heard; they were not alone, but God was with them (section 12). He demonstrates the aspect of forgiveness in prayer and tells in section 13 that lack of willingness to forgive the debtor from the part of the one who prays, puts a blemish on the prayer. In sections 14-15, by means of two practical examples he remarks that prayer involves perfecting 'the rest of God' (Isa. 28:12) in the form of works of mercy. This prayer takes precedence over

verbal prayer. A person should do the will of God and that is excellent prayer; at the same time he should also be eager in verbal prayer (section 16). Section 17 deals with the different occasions for prayer. In the concluding section he is of the opinion that blood of the prophets which are in the hands of the Israelites will be cleansed only by washing in the water of baptism, and partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ. He also mentions here that pure prayer converses with God and all the prayers should begin with the prayer of the Lord. Throughout this Demonstration the spirituality of the heart is expressed, which became prominent in the later Syriac writers.

1. Purity of heart is a prayer, more so than all the prayers which are prayed in a loud voice, and silence being joined together with a luminous mind is better than the loud voice when a person cries out. My beloved, now give me your heart and your mind, and hear about the power of pure prayer and see how our righteous forefathers were triumphant before God through their prayer and how it became a pure offering (Mal. 1:11) for them.

For the offerings were accepted through prayer (Gen. 4:4).

And it furthermore changed the flood (Gen. 8:20-22).

And it healed barrenness (Gen. 18; 1 Sam. 1-2).

And it destroyed armies (Jos. 12).

And it revealed the mysteries (Ex. 3:2).

And it divided the sea (Ex. 14; Jos. 4).

And it forced a passage through the Jordan (Ex. 14; Jos. 4).

And it withheld the sun and made the moon to standstill (Jos. 10:12-13).

And it destroyed the unclean and it caused fire to come down (Num. 16:35; 1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 1:10).

And it shut up the heaven (1 Kgs 17:1).

And it caused to ascend from the pit (Dan. 6).

And it saved from the fire (Dan. 3).

And it delivered from the sea (Jon. 2).

And its power is very great, just as the power of pure fasting is great. As I explained and demonstrated to you indeed in the previous *memrā* concerning the Fasting, so also it does not weary me (now) to tell and demonstrate to you about prayer.

2. First of all, the offering of Abel was accepted indeed before God through his purity of heart, and that of Cain was rejected (Gen. 4:3-5). And how was the matter known to us that the offering of Abel was accepted and that of Cain was rejected? And (how) did Abel understand that his offering was accepted and also again how did Cain know that his had been rejected? I will convince you about this as much as I can. But my beloved, you know that if an offering was acceptable before God, (then) it was distinguished by the fact that fire would descend from heaven and the offering was consumed by it. For when Abel and Cain offered their offerings together, living fire that was ministering before God (Ps. 104:4) came down and licked up the pure offering of Abel, and (since) that of Cain was impure it did not touch it.⁷³ From there Abel understood that his offering was accepted, on the other hand Cain also realized that his was rejected. The fruits of Cain's heart demonstrated and

⁷³ Syriac writers are familiar with this exegetical tradition of the descent of fire. It may be borrowed from the sacrifice of David (1 Chr. 21:26) and the sacrifice of Solomon (2 Chr. 7:1) where the fire comes down from heaven on the sacrifices. For further details see S. P. Brock, "Fire from heaven: from Abel's Sacrifice to the Eucharist. A theme in Syriac Christianity", *SP* 25 (1993), 229-243.

witnessed about him that he was full of treachery when he killed his brother (Gen. 4:8). For to what his mind conceived, his hands gave birth. And the purity of the heart of Abel is his prayer.

3. But I will convince you my beloved about this that fire licked up all the acceptable offerings. For when Manoah, the father of Samson offered up an offering, the living fire descended and licked it up (Jud. 13:20), in the same flame the angel who spoke with him ascended to heaven.

Also Abraham, when God asserted to him the promise that a son would be born to him, saying to him, "Take for yourself a three year old calf, a three year old goat, a pigeon and a young dove" (Gen. 15:9), and when Abraham sacrificed them and cut (them) into pieces, placing a member against its companion, there fell upon him a deep sleep: darkness came and fire descended,⁷⁴ and passed between the divisions and it devoured the offerings of Abraham (Gen. 15:17).

Also in the case of the offerings that were offered in the temporary tent (Tabernacle), living fire descended to consume them (Lev. 9:24).

Also with Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, when they despised the administering of the offering, fire descended as usual at the time of the offering, but it found their offerings not pure and it did not touch them. When they saw that their offering was not consumed, they brought strange fire to consume it, so that they would not be censured by Moses, (asking) for what cause was the offering not consumed? The strange fire consumed

74 The biblical texts do not mention the descent of fire from heaven on the sacrifices of Abraham and Manoah; cf. Gen. 15:17 and Jud. 13:19-20.

the offering but this (fire) from heaven devoured them (Lev. 10:2; Num. 3:4, 26:61). The Lord sanctified himself over them, over those who despised his ministry.

Also when two hundred and fifty men were divided against Moses and offered incense without authority, fire was commanded to come in from before Lord and it devoured them (Num. 16:35). Their censers were sanctified through their lives.

Again when Solomon built the sanctuary and offered sacrifices, and burnt offerings, he prayed and fire descended from heaven, and devoured the fat of the burnt offerings on the altar (2 Chr. 7:1).

Again when Elijah offered an offering fire descended and consumed it (1 Kgs 18:38), and his offering was accepted just as that of Abel, and that of the worshippers of Baal was rejected, just as that of Cain.

All these arguments about fire I have written to you so that the word is assured to you that fire devoured the offering of Abel.

4. But hear my beloved about this pure prayer that how many powers were revealed by means of it. For when Abraham prayed he brought back the booty, which the five kings (had captured) (Gen. 14:16). Again through his prayer a barren woman gave birth (Gen. 21:2). Similarly through the power of his prayer he received the promise that in his seed the nations would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). Isaac also demonstrated the power of prayer when he prayed over Rebecca and she gave birth (Gen. 25:21); and for Abimelek,⁷⁵ and the anger (of God) was withheld from him.

⁷⁵ According to Gen. 26:6-11 Isaac does not pray over Abimelek. Aphr. may have confused the prayer of Abraham for Abimelek referred in Gen. 20:17.

5. Our father Jacob also prayed at Bethel and saw the gate of heaven opened, and a ladder leading up to the height (Gen. 28:12). This is a symbol of our Saviour which Jacob saw (Gen. 28:12-15). The gate of heaven is Christ, as he said, "I am the gate of life, everyone who enters through me shall live for ever" (Jn. 10:9). David also said, "This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter" (Ps. 118:20). Again the ladder which Jacob saw is a symbol of our Saviour that through him the righteous people ascend from below to above. Again it is a symbol of the cross of our Saviour which was raised in the form of a ladder, our Lord standing above from it. For above Christ is the Lord of all, as the blessed Apostle said: "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Jacob called that place Bethel (Gen. 28:19), and Jacob erected there a pillar of stone for a testimony, and he poured oil in its top. Our father Jacob too did this before in symbol, that the stones would receive anointing. For the people who believed in the anointed (Messiah) will be anointed as John said about them, "God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones" (Lk. 3:8). For the mystery of the calling of the Nations is manifested before through the prayer of Jacob.

6. Then see, my beloved, how many symbols are hidden in the vision which Jacob saw. For he saw the gate of heaven (Gen. 28:17) which is Christ; he saw the ladder (Gen. 28:12), the symbol of the Cross; he anointed the stones (Gen. 28:18), a type of the Nations. He vowed to give the tithe to Levi (Gen. 28:22; Heb. 7:8-10). For the tithes-givers and the firstfruits receivers were hidden in him (Gen. 28:22). Judah, the lion's whelp, was in his loins (Gen. 49:9), in whom was hidden Christ, the king (Gen. 49:9; Heb. 7:9-10), and he showed the anointing through him. The tribes who are within him vowed to the Levites

and the kings who are in his loins enlarged his heart. The spirit of the prophets observed in him those who would come into being from his seed.

“He crossed Jordan only with his staff” (Gen. 32:10), a wonderful symbol he held in his hand beforehand - the sign of the Cross of the Great Prophet. He lifted up his feet to the land of the people of the east (Gen. 29:1), because from it “a light came forth to the Nations” (Lk. 2:32). He rested near the well which had a stone on its mouth which many could not lift up (Gen. 29:2-10), for many shepherds could not lift it up and open the well until Jacob came, he lifted up the stone and gave drink to his sheep by the power of the Shepherd who was hidden in his loins. Many prophets came and they could not bring forth baptism, until the Great Prophet came and he alone opened it up, and baptized in it, calling out and proclaiming in a pleasant voice; “Everyone who thirsts, let him come to me and drink” (Jn. 7:37).

Again Jacob prayed in his return from Laban, and he was rescued from the hands of Esau his brother (Gen. 32:1-22). He prayed and confessed, saying thus, “With my staff, I crossed over this river Jordan, and now I have become two camps” (Gen. 32:10). O wondrous symbol of our Saviour! For, when our Lord came first, the staff left from the shoot of Jesse (Isa. 11:1) just like the staff of Jacob. When he returns from his Father at his second coming, he goes to Him with two camps, one from the People, the other from the Peoples, just like Jacob who returned to Isaac, his father with two camps.

For Jacob returned (with) his eleven sons (Gen. 32:22); and eleven disciples come with our Saviour because Judas is not with them. Afterwards Benjamin was born and there were twelve sons of Jacob, and afterwards

Tolmai⁷⁶ was chosen and there were twelve disciples for our Saviour. This is so about the prayer of Jacob.

7. What we should say then about the limitless power of the prayer of Moses? His prayer rescued him from the hands of Pharaoh and it showed him the *shekinah* of his God (Ex. 3:2). Through his prayer he brought the ten plagues on Pharaoh (Ex. 7:8-12). It was again his prayer (that) divided the sea (Ex. 14:21) and made the bitter water sweet (Ex. 15:23-25), it caused manna to come down and the quails to come out (Ex. 16:1-35), it broke the rock and supplied water abundantly (Ex. 17:1-7), it conquered Amalek and strengthened Joshua (Ex. 17:8-13), it routed Og and Sihon in the war (Num. 21:21-35), it brought the wicked ones down to Sheol (Num. 16:33), it changed the anger of his God from his people and shattered the calf of sin (Ex. 32:20), it brought down the tablets from the mountain and made his (Moses') face shine (Ex. 34:29). More is the telling (about) his prayer than for that of Jacob.

Joshua, son of Nun had also excelled through his prayer before his God. His prayer divided the Jordan (Jos. 3:16), it also pulled down the walls of Jericho (Jos. 6:1-20) and routed Achar (Jos. 7:16-26), withheld the sun and made the moon to stand still (Jos. 10:11-14), it destroyed the kings and subjected the land and caused the Israelites to inherit (it).

8. We may come to the prayer of silence which Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed (1 Sam. 1:13). It was acceptable before God, it opened up her barren womb and caused her shame to depart, and she gave birth to a Nazirite and a priest (1 Sam. 1).

⁷⁶ Tolmai is name of the disciple found in the early Syriac tradition for the one who was chosen instead of Judas. In the Greek text of Acts 1:26 he is called Mathias.

Samuel also prayed before his God because he showed a sign to the Israelites, when he made known to them their sins when they asked for a king over them; Samuel offered up a sacrifice on the altar (1 Sam. 12:17-18) and rain descended in the days of the wheat harvest.

Again David also prayed before his God and he escaped from the hands of Saul (1 Sam. 19:18-24). After he had counted the people he also prayed, and the wrath and the anger turned away from them,⁷⁷ when the destroyer had power over them (2 Sam. 24:25).

Again Asa also prayed and his prayer demonstrated great power; when Zerah the Indian (Ethiopian) went out against him with an army of thousand times a thousand with him (2 Chr. 14:8), Asa then prayed and said, "By this, your power will be made known, our God, when you finish off a vast people by means of a small people". God heard his prayer and sent his angel to route them (2 Chr. 14:10-15) and the big army was overpowered by the power of Asa's prayer.

The prayer of Joshaphat, his son also destroyed the power of the enemies and conquered them (2 Chr. 20:3-30).

Hezekiah also prayed and his prayer cast down one hundred and eighty-five thousand men through an angel, the leader of the army (2 Kgs 19:14-19).

Again Jonah prayed before his God from the depths of the sea (Jon. 2:2-4), it was heard and was answered, and he was saved without any harm. For, his prayer pierced the depths, overcame the waves, overpowered the storms, pierced the cloud (Sir. 35:17), flew through the air and opened the heaven, and came near before the

⁷⁷ Aphr. mentioned this incident again in Dem. X:2.

throne of the Most High by means of Gabriel⁷⁸ who brings prayers before God. The depths threw up the prophetic man, and the fish brought forth Jonah to the dry land.

Similarly, the prayer of Ananiah, Azariah and Mishael overpowered the flame, mitigated the fervour of fire and changed its fiery hot nature. It controlled the anger of the king and saved the just men (Dan. 3:23-30).

9. Daniel also prayed and his prayer shut the mouth of the lions (Dan. 6:17-24). The devouring mouth was shut before the flesh and bones of the just man. Lions extended their hands and received Daniel so that he would not fall down on the earth. They embraced him in their arms and they kissed his feet. When Daniel stood up in the pit to pray, they also spread out their hands to heaven like Daniel. He who receives the prayers descended to them and shut up the mouth of the lions. For Daniel said to Darius, "My God has sent his angel and has shut the mouth of the lions and they have not hurt me" (Dan. 6:22). For the pit was closed and sealed, and light shone forth inside it. Lions were then happy, that they saw the light because of Daniel. For when Daniel wished to sleep, the lions laid themselves down flat so that he might sleep on them and not on the ground. For that pit was illumined more than an upper room with its many windows (Dan. 6:10). There his prayers were many more than in his upper room where he prayed only three times (in a day) (Dan. 6:11). When Daniel came up victorious, his slanderers fell (into the pit) instead of him and the mouths of the lions were opened and they devoured them, reducing to powder their bones.

⁷⁸ Aphr. depicted also the role of Gabriel in the pure prayer in Dem. III, sections 14 and 15. The idea that Gabriel is taking the prayers to God is perhaps based on Daniel 9:21.

Again his prayer caused the captivity to return from Babylon after the completion of seventy years (Dan. 9:23-27).

Each one of our righteous fathers at the time of affliction that came to them, they took upon them the armour of prayer,⁷⁹ and through it they were saved from affliction.

10. Again our Saviour taught the prayer and said, "You should pray secretly to the Hidden One; He sees everything" (Mt. 6:6). For he said, "Enter the inner chamber and pray secretly to your Father, and the Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt. 6:6). But why, my beloved, did our Saviour teach and say, "Pray to your Father in secret with the door closed?". I will demonstrate you about this as much as I have understood. For he said, "Pray to your Father in secret with the door closed". But this, the word of our Lord shows us thus, "Pray in secret in your heart, and close the door". What is the door that he said to close? If not your mouth, which is (the door to) the temple in which Christ dwells as the Apostle said, "You are the temple of the Lord" (1 Cor. 3:16), for him to enter into your inner man, to this house, cleanse it from everything that is unclean, while the door, that is your mouth, is to be closed.⁸⁰ If that was not so, how would you understand this matter? For if it happens to you that you were in a land, and there is no house and door, would you not pray in secret? Or if it happens to you again that you were on the top of a mountain, would you not pray?

79 The phrase 'armour of prayer' occupies an important place in the Syriac writers. It may be derived from Wisdom 18:21.

80 This idea is found in the Greek, Latin and Syriac fathers; some of the examples are Origen, *On Prayer* XX:2; Ambrose, *On the Sacraments* VI:12-13 and Ephrem, *Fid.* XX:6.

And our Saviour showed this that God knows the will of the heart and of the thought, just as our Lord wrote, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Mt. 6:8). It is written in the prophet Isaiah, "Before they who were chosen by me call, I will hear them, and before they make the cry I will answer them" (Isa. 65:24). Isaiah said again about the wicked, "Even though you multiply prayer I will not listen" (Isa. 1:15). He said again,, "They may cry in my ears with a loud voice, but I shall not hear them" (Ezek. 8:18). But he said this about deceitful prayer, which is not accepted. For you must hear with excellence all the words, then you will understand their power.

11. Our Life-giver said another saying there and it should be heard with discernment. For he said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). And how should this saying be understood by you, my beloved? Behold our Life-giver said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them". (Does this mean) if you are alone, Christ is not with you? Behold, it is written about those who believe in Christ, that Christ dwells in them (Jn. 6:56-57), he showed by this that (even) before two or three are there, (even) then Christ is with them. I will show you that there is a place where instead of two or three, more than a thousand are gathered in the name of Christ, but Christ is not with them. (On the other hand) there is a man who is all alone but Christ is with him.

This saying which our Life-giver said is fair and beautiful for his hearers. For he said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). When a man sweeps his soul in the name of Christ, Christ dwells in him, and God dwells in Christ. Therefore that man becomes one of the three - he himself,

Christ who dwells in him and God who is in Christ - as our Lord said, "I am in my Father, and my Father is in me" (Jn. 14:10-11).

He (also) said, "I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). Again he said, "You are in me and I am in you" (Jn. 14:20). Again he said through the prophet, "I shall dwell in them and I shall walk in them" (Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 37:27, 43:9; 2 Cor. 6:16). In this sense you can understand this saying which our Life-giver spoke.

12. Now I will demonstrate you my beloved that God was with each one of our righteous fathers who prayed.

For, when Moses prayed in the mountain, he was alone, but God was with him (Ex. 32:31-33). It was not that he was not heard because he was alone, but the prayer of Moses was still more heard and it assuaged the anger of his God.

Elijah also was alone on the mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:42), and his prayer demonstrated amazing powers. For the heaven was shut up through his prayer (1 Kgs 17:1), and again their bonds were loosed through his prayer (1 Kgs 18:41-45). His prayer snatched (the son of the widow) from the hands of death and seized (him) from Sheol (1 Kgs 17:17-24). Again his prayer removed uncleanness from Israel; his prayer brought down fire three times, once on the altar and twice on the great ones (1 Kgs 18:38). When fire descended through his prayer, it took vengeance for him. He knelt down on his knees and prayed, and he was answered immediately. The four hundred and fifty who cried out at a high voice were not heard because they were crying in the name of Baal (1 Kgs 18:19-39), while Elijah was alone, but was much more heard.

Similarly with the prophet Jonah, when he prayed from the lowest Sheol, (Jon. 2:2-10) he was heard; when he was alone he was heard and was answered immediately.

Elisha also prayed and caused (a dead person) to return from Sheol (2 Kgs 4:33-37) and he was set free from the hands of the evil men who surrounded him. Though he was alone in appearance, yet a great army compassed him; for, he said to his disciples, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kgs 6:16). Though they were alone, they were not alone.

For, from this matter which I have explained to you, you can understand the saying of our Lord, which he said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

13. As I have convinced you above, at the moment when you pray raise your heart above and your eyes below, and enter yourself inside your inner person and pray in secret to your Father who is in heaven (Mt. 6:6). All these things I have written to you about the subject of prayer, that when it is pure, it is heard and when it is not pure it is not heard, because there are people among us who multiply the prayers, make long intercessions, bowing themselves down and spreading out their hands (Isa. 1:15), but the works of prayer are far away from them. For they pray the prayer which our Life-giver taught, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive to our debtors" (Mt. 6:12). O you who pray, should remember that you are bringing an offering before God. Let not (the angel) who presents prayers feel shame at an offering which has a blemish. That is to say, you pray that you be forgiven and acknowledge that you forgive; consider first in your mind whether you really forgive and then acknowledge 'I do forgive'. For you

should not deceitfully act with God and say 'I forgive' when you do not forgive. For God is no man like you, whom you can deceive (Num. 23:19). "When a man sins against a man, he may beseech the Lord, but when a man acts foolishly against God, whom will he beseech?" (1 Sam. 2:25). So do not find yourself guilty through your prayer.

Hear again what our Lord said, "When you bring an offering and you remember that you have some grudge against your brother,⁸¹ leave your offering before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother and then come and bring your offering" (Mt. 5:23-24). Lest when you pray, you remember that you have some grudge (against your brother), thereby you should consider in your mind that your prayer has been left before the altar. He who carries the prayers (Gabriel) will not wish to take it from the earth because he has inspected and seen a blemish in your offering. If it is pure, he takes it up before God. If he finds in your prayer, "forgive me and I do forgive", in such case it is said to the one who prays by (him who) takes up the prayers, "First of all forgive your debtor, and then I will raise up your (prayer) to the Lord, your creditor. You forgive the hundred denarii according to your poor condition and the Lord, your Creditor, will forgive you the ten thousand talents according to his greatness (Mt. 18:23-35). He will not reckon with you for any payment or interest".

If you are willing and forgiving then, he (Gabriel) takes your offering, the prayer, raises and brings it up with him. If you do not forgive, in such a case he will say to you, "I will not bring an unclean offering before the holy throne. But, see, you go there to give an account to your Creditor, taking your offering with you"; and he leaves your offering and goes off.

81 This reading is not found in SC P and the reading of D is not available.

Now listen to what the prophet had said, “Cursed is he who has a good ram in his flock, but he vows and sacrifices a sick one to the Lord” (Mal. 1:14). For he said, “Offer it to your governor, and (see) whether he is pleased with you or will he give you favour?” (Mal. 1:8). Therefore you ought to forgive your debtor before your prayer and then pray. And when you pray, your prayer will ascend before God on high, and it is not left on the earth.

14. For He (God) said through the prophet, “This is my rest, give rest to the weary” (Isa. 28:12). Therefore give the rest of God, o man. There is no need to you to say ‘forgive me’. Give rest to the weary, visit the sick, provide for the poor (Mt. 25:35-36); this is prayer. I shall convince you, my beloved, about this, that (if) all the time a man does the rest of God, this is prayer. For it is written thus, “When Zimri committed fornication with a Midianite woman, Phinhas, the son of Eleazar saw him and he entered into the cell and killed both of them” (Num. 25:6-8; Sir. 45:23-26). Their killing was considered as prayer to him; David says about him thus, “Phinhas has stood up and prayed, and it was considered a victory to him for generations, for ever” (Ps. 106:30-31). He killed them (lit. their killing which he killed) for the sake of his God and it was considered as prayer for him.

Take heed, my beloved, suppose an opportunity of giving rest to the will of God happens to you, you say, “the time for prayer is near, I will pray and then take care”. While you are seeking to complete your prayer the opportunity for giving rest has slipped away from you and you are disabled from (doing) the will and rest of God, and through your prayer you are guilty of sin. Rather, do the rest of God and it is prayer.

15. Now listen to the word which the Apostle had spoken, "If we judge ourselves, we will not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). Judge this in yourself what I am saying to you: if you happen to go on a long journey and you happen (to be) thirsty in the heat and you come on one of the brothers unexpectedly and say to him, 'satisfy me from the weariness of thirst' and he tells you, 'it is time for prayer, I will pray and then I will come to you'. While he prays and (before) coming to you, you die out of thirst; what seems better to you, that he should go and pray, or that he should satisfy your exhaustion? And if again you go on a journey during the season of winter, and rain and snow come upon you and you become exhausted from your cold, again you chance upon your friend during the time of prayer and he answers you in the same manner, and you die out of cold. What profit will his prayer have. For, he did not refresh the troubled one?

For our Lord, when he showed the demonstration of the time of judgement, when he separated those who were to stand on his right and on his left, then he said to those on his right, I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was sick and you visited me, I was a stranger and you gathered me.⁸² He spoke in the same way to those on his left, while they did not do these things, he sent them into torture, and he sent the sons of the right into the kingdom.

16. Prayer is fair and its works are virtuous.

Prayer is accepted when it gives rest.

Prayer is heard when forgiveness is found in it.

Prayer is beloved when it is pure from all deceit.

Prayer is powerful when the power of God is fulfilled in it.

⁸² The order of the four requirements (hungry, thirsty, sick and stranger) does not agree with the order of Dem. XX:5, Ep. Pub. § 8 of Ephrem and Mathew 25:35-36.

This I have written to you, my beloved, that a person should do the will of God, and that constitutes prayer. That is how prayer seems to me to excel. On the basis of what I have said to you, you should not withdraw yourself from prayer. But all the more you be diligent for prayer and not to be reluctant (in it), as it is written that our Lord said, "Be praying and it shall not weary you" (Lk. 18:1). You should be diligent in wakefulness, remove from yourself drowsiness and slumber; you should be vigilant both by day and night, and you should not be disheartened.

17. I will demonstrate you the seasons of prayer. For there is petition, thanksgiving and praise. (In) petition a person seeks mercy for his sins, (in) thanksgiving you give thanks to your Father who is in heaven and (in) praise you praise Him for His works. At the time of your distress, offer up a petition. At a time that you are provided with His good things, you should give thanks to the giver. At a time that the mind rejoices, offer up praise. You should pray all your prayers before God with discernment. See how David was always saying, "I have risen to give thanks to you for your righteous judgements" (Ps. 119:62). In another psalm he had also said, "Praise the Lord from the heaven, praise Him in the heights" (Ps. 148:1). Again he said, "I will bless the Lord at all times and His praises are in my mouth at all times" (Ps. 34:1). He had prayed not using a single method (of prayer) but with difference.

18. Thus, my beloved, I am convinced myself that everything people ask diligently God will give them. But he who offers up in mockery, in him He has no pleasure, as it is written, "Therefore this is required of the one who prays, offering up prayer, that his offering may be examined well lest blemish be found in it. And then let

him offer it" (Mt. 5:23-24), so that your offering will not remain on the earth. What is the offering, if not the prayer, as I wrote to you above. For David said, "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord and fulfil your vows to the Most High" (Ps. 50:14). For pure prayer is the best of all the offerings.

Therefore be diligent, my beloved, to the prayer which speaks with God on behalf of you, as it is written in the prophet Isaiah, when he made known to the children of Israel their sins and called them, "rulers of Sodom" (Isa. 1:10), and no more the "sons whom I reared and raised" (Isa. 1:2). For they had exchanged their honour for shame. Above Isaiah had said about them, "sons whom I have reared and raised" (Isa. 1:2), but below he said, "rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:10). When they did not hear the voice of the prophet which said about them, "their land lies desolate and their cities burnt with fire" (Isa. 1:7), he called them, "rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah". Then they took and brought their offerings so that he might forgive them, but their offerings were not accepted because their wickedness was as great as that of the house of Eli, the priest. For He (God) said in the Scripture that, "The wickedness of the house of Eli will not be forgiven by means of sacrifices and offerings" (1 Sam. 3:14).

The same word issued forth also on the children of Israel. For Isaiah said to them, "of what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of the rams and the fat of the fatlings, and the blood of bulls; nor do I require lambs. Who required these at your hands?" (Isa. 1:11-12). And they said to Him, 'Why have you sought (for them), and why are our offerings not accepted? So the prophet said to them, "because your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:15).

They say to him, "What is the means of escape for us?" He says to them, "wash yourselves and be purified, remove the evils of your works from before my eyes. Cease from evil doings and learn to do good. Seek out judgement and do good to the oppressed. Administer justice to the fatherless, and administer justice to the widows" (Isa. 1:16-17). But they say to the prophet, 'When we have done these things what will happen to us?' He says them, "The Lord says thus, when you have done these things, come let us speak with each other" (Isa. 1:18).

How do people speak with God, if not in prayer when it is without a blemish? If it has a blemish in it, it (prayer) does not speak with God, as it is written, for He said in reply, "Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear because your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:15). He said to them, 'When you have washed yourselves and we have spoken together' "though your sins be as scarlet, I shall whiten them as snow, though they be red as crimson, they shall be like a wool. If you are consenting and listening to me you shall eat the good things of the land; if you are not willing and are disputing, you shall be killed by the sword. The mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa. 1:18-20).

19. O glorious mysteries which Isaiah saw beforehand! For he said to them, "Your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:15). What is this blood, which Isaiah foresaw, if not the blood of Christ which they took upon themselves and on their children; and the blood of the prophets whom they killed? This is the blood which turned red as scarlet and as crimson bespattered them and (so) they would not be cleansed unless they washed themselves in the water of baptism and partake (in) the body and blood of Christ. Blood is washed through the blood (of Christ) and body is cleansed through the body

(of Christ); sins are washed away in water, then prayer converses with the Most High.

See, my beloved, sacrifices and offerings are rejected and in their place prayer was chosen. Therefore love pure prayer and toil at petition. At the beginning of all your prayers you should pray the prayer of your Lord. Be diligent in everything that I have written to you, and whenever you pray remember your friend.

The end of the Demonstration on Prayer

V THE DEMONSTRATION ON WARS

During the time Aphrahat wrote this Demonstration the hostility between Rome and Persia was at a peak. Shapur II, the Sasanian king, suspected the Christians of having unpatriotic relations with the enemy, the Romans. Thus the long rule of Shapur II is noteworthy for his persecution of the Christians living within the Sasanian empire and the martyrdom of many Christians. Therefore the reason that prompted Aphrahat in the formulation of this Demonstration may be the persecution of Shapur II. Aphrahat says, do not blame the evil one who has poured evil on many because the times are set beforehand. He gives a theological significance to the vision of Daniel and to the interpretations given by him to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in this Demonstration. The main theme of the Demonstration, "Whoever is exalted will be humbled and everyone who is humbled will be exalted", is presented in the first two sections. This is illustrated clearly through the examples taken from the Bible of those wicked figures who glorified themselves and were humbled, and the righteous ones who humbled themselves and were glorified, in sections 3, 4 and 7. Shapur II is the ram whose horns are broken and the fourth beast is the Romans (sections 5-6). He says through the sections 8, 9 and 16 that the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar who gloried in himself is a warning to the Persian king. Section 10 presents Daniel's vision of the four

beasts which represent the Babylonians, the Persians and the Medes, the Greeks and the Romans respectively. In the following three sections Aphrahat deals with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretations of Daniel. It is said that the stone that shattered the image and filled the whole world is the kingdom of Christ who makes an end to the kingdom of this world. Once again he mentions the vision of Daniel of the four beasts (sections 15-20). The children of Israel will not receive the kingdom of the Most High (section 21) and this is depicted through the imagery of the vineyard which was rejected (section 22). The eternal kingdom was possessed by the holy people (the Church) who were chosen in the place of the People (section 23). Since the sons of Jacob did not produce results in the kingdom, the kingdom was taken away from them and was given to the sons of Esau; they will keep it for its giver and the kingdom will not be conquered by the enemies because Jesus assists them. Jesus will be King for ever and his kingdom will never pass away (section 24). In the concluding section he mentions through the examples that the riches of God are infinite and unlimited. No man can reach to the depth of the word of God; therefore nobody should dispute about it and say "these are so and it is sufficient". He ends the Demonstration by consoling his suffering Church that the beast shall be killed at its time and there will be peace for the people of God.

1. At this time, there fell upon me this thought about the future commotion that will take place at this time and about the army which has gathered itself together for war (lit. the sword). But the times are placed beforehand by God; the times of peace were fulfilled in the days of the good and the just ones, and the times of many evils were fulfilled in the days of the evil and the unjust ones. For, thus it is written: "The good shall take place, and blessed is the one by whose hand it comes. Evil shall take place, but woe to the one by whose hand

it comes" (Mt. 18:7). Goodness has come to the people of God and benevolence befalls on the one by whose hand goodness came. Evil has been aroused against the army, assembled together by means of the evil and haughty one who glories in himself. Woe also awaits there for the one by whose hand the evil is stirred up. But, my beloved, do not blame the evil one⁸³ who has poured evil on many because the times are set beforehand and the time of their fulfilment has come.

2. Because it is an evil time, therefore hear this thing which I write in mystery to you. For it is written thus, "Whatever is exalted among the sons of man is unclean before God" (Prov. 16:5). Again it is written, "For everyone who is exalted will be humbled and everyone who is humbled will be exalted" (Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11).⁸⁴ Jeremiah also said, "Let not the mighty glory in his might nor the rich in his riches" (Jer. 9:23). Again the blessed Apostle said, "Whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord" (2 Cor. 10:17). And David said, "I have seen the wicked who is exalted and elevated like the cedar of Lebanon and when I passed by, he was not, and I sought him and I did not find him" (Ps. 37:35-36).

3. For everyone who has gloried in himself has been humbled. Cain gloried in himself against Abel his brother and killed him; but he was cursed and "became a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:14).

83 He may be referring to Shapur II who persecuted the Christians by the term 'evil one'. He encourages his suffering Church by assuring them that the evil one shall be humbled and the righteous shall be glorified.

84 One of the main themes of this Dem. is that "For everyone who is exalted will be humbled, and everyone who is humbled will be exalted" (Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11, 18:14). The main reason which prompted Aphr. to compose this Dem. may have been the sufferings which occurred to the Christians under the rule of Shapur II.

Again the Sodomites gloried in themselves against Lot; but fire fell upon them from heaven and consumed them, and their city was overturned on them (Gen. 19:1-25).

And Esau gloried in himself against Jacob and persecuted him; but Jacob received the birthright and the blessings of Esau.

And the sons of Jacob gloried in themselves against Joseph; but they fell down and worshipped him in Egypt.

And Pharaoh gloried in himself against Moses and against his people; but Pharaoh and his forces drowned in the sea (Ex. 14:19-30).

And Dathan and Abiram gloried in themselves against Moses; but they went down alive to Sheol (Num. 16:33).

And Goliath threatened David; but he fell before him and was defeated (1 Sam. 17:40-54).

Again Saul persecuted David; but he fell by the sword of Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1-4).

And Absalom exalted himself against him; but Joab killed him in the war (2 Sam. 18:14).

Again Bar-hadad gloried in himself against Ahab; but he was handed over to the hand of Israel (1 Kgs 20).

And Sennacherib reviled against Hezekiah and his God; but his force became dead corpses when one of the Watchers went forth and destroyed in his camp one hundred and eighty-five thousand through the prayer of Hezekiah and through the prayer of the prophet Isaiah, the glorious of the prophets (2 Kgs 19:35-37; Isa. 37:36).

And Ahab magnified himself against Micah; but he ascended and fell down in Ramath- Gilead (1 Kgs 22).

And Jezebel gloried in herself against Elijah; but the dogs ate her in the inheritance of Jezreel (1 Kgs 21:23).

And Haman gloried in himself against Mordecai; but his wickedness returned upon his head (Est. 9:25).

And the Babylonians gloried in themselves against Daniel and threw him into the den of lions (Dan. 6:17-25); but when Daniel ascended victorious they were thrown down into the den instead of him.

Again the Babylonians gloried in themselves and slandered Hananiah and his companions, and they were thrown into the furnace of fire; but when they ascended victorious the flame of fire devoured the slanderers.

4. For Nebuchadnezzar said, "I will climb up to heaven and raise my throne above the stars of God, and sit on the high mountains which are in the foothills of the north" (Isa. 14:13). Isaiah spoke against him, "Because your heart thus magnified you, from henceforth you shall be brought down to Sheol and all those who see you will be astonished at you" (Isa. 14:15-16).

And Sennacherib also thus said, "I will ascend to the heights of the mountains and also to the foothills of Lebanon. I will dig and drink water, and will dry up with the hoofs of my horses all the deep rivers" (2 Kgs 19:23-24; Isa. 37:24-25). Because he magnified himself thus, Isaiah again spoke against him, "Does the axe boast itself over him who cuts down with it, or does the saw magnify itself over him who saws with it, or the staff exalt itself over him who lifts it up?" (Isa. 10:15).

You, Sennacherib are the axe in the hands of him who cuts and you are the saw in the hands of him who saws, and the staff in the hand of him who lifts for chastisement, and you are the staff for striking. You are sent against an impious people and again you are ordained against a wrathful people that you may take away in captivity and take the spoil, but you have made

them to all the sons of men and to all the peoples as the mire of the streets. When you have done all these things, why are you magnified in opposition to him who holds you, and glory in opposition to him who saws with you and insult the city of the Holy One? and you have said to the children of Jerusalem, "Why can your God not deliver you from my hands?" And you dare to say, "Who is the Lord that he will deliver you from my hands?" (2 Kgs 18:35; Isa. 36:20). Because of this, hear the word of the Lord which has said, "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and I will tread him under foot upon my mountains" (Isa. 14:25). When he has been broken and trampled, "the virgin, the daughter of Zion will treat him with contempt, and the daughter of Jerusalem will shake her head and say, Whom have you reproached and blasphemed, and against whom have you raised your voice? You have lifted up your eyes on high against the Holy One of Israel, and by means of your messengers you have reproached the Lord. Now see that the hook has fallen on your nostrils and the bridle on your lips. You have returned with a broken heart, who came with an exalted heart" (2 Kgs 19:21-23, 28; Isa. 37:22-24, 29). His murder came by the hands of his beloved ones; he was overthrown and fell down before his god there in the house of his confidence (2 Kgs 19:37; Isa. 37:38). It was also fitting, my beloved, that this sacrifice and offering before that god on whom he trusted, and in the house of his worship his body became a memorial for his idol.

5. Again the ram was magnified and was lifted up, and butted to the west, to the north, and to the south, and humbled many animals. They did not stand before him until the yearling goat came from the west and smote the ram, broke his horns and greatly humbled the ram (Dan. 8:4-5). The ram was the king of Media and Persia,

who is Darius; and the yearling goat, Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian. Now Daniel saw the ram “when he was in the east before the gate of Shushan, the palace which is in the province of Elam, the river Ulai. He was butting towards the west, towards the north and towards the south; and none of the animals were standing before him” (Dan. 8:2, 4).

The yearling goat came out from the city of the Greeks and magnified himself against the ram, “he struck him and broke his two horns, the greater and the lesser” (Dan. 8:7). But why did he say that he broke his both horns, if not because he humbled both the kingdoms which he ruled, the lesser is of the Medes and the greater is of the Persians? But when Alexander, the Greek came he killed Darius, the king of Media and Persia. For the angel thus spoke to Daniel, when he explained to him the vision, “The ram which you saw is the king of Media and Persia, and the yearling goat is the king of the Greeks” (Dan. 8:20-21). For, from the time that both horns of the ram were broken, until this time, were six hundred and forty-eight years.⁸⁵

6. Therefore, the horns of the ram were broken. Although, his horns were broken, behold he exalts and magnifies himself against the fourth beast which is powerful and mighty, its teeth are of iron and its nails of brass, and it devoured and broke in pieces, and trampled with its feet that which is left (Dan. 7:19). O ram, whose horns are broken, keep quiet, away from the beast, do not provoke it, lest it devour you and break you in pieces. The ram could not stand before the yearling goat; how

⁸⁵ This Dem. is written according to the era of the Greeks, in the year 648; that is reckoning from B. C. 311-312. This corresponds with the year 336-337 A. D.

will it stand before the dreadful beast, whose mouth speaks great things (Dan. 7:8), and that which it finds it couches down against, like a lion against its prey. Whoever provokes the lion becomes its portion, whoever wakes the beast, it devours him. Who goes and falls under the feet of the beast, it tramples him. For the beast would not be killed until the Ancient of days sit on the throne (Dan. 7:13) and the Son of Man comes near before him and authority is given to him. Then that beast shall be killed and its body will perish. The kingdom of the Son of Man will be an eternal kingdom and his authority is for ever and ever.

7. O you who are haughty, keep silence, do not glory in yourself. For, if your wealth has lifted up your heart, it was not greater than that of Hezekiah, who because he gloried about it before the Babylonians, everything was taken away and went to Babylon (2 Kgs 20:13-19; Isa. 39:1-8).

And if you glory about your sons, they shall be driven away from you to the beast as the sons of king Hezekiah were driven away and they became eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (2 Kgs 20:18; Isa. 39:7).

And if you glory about your wisdom, you are no more than the chief of Tyre, whom Ezekiel scorned and said to him, "Are you wiser than Daniel, or have you seen hidden things in your wisdom?" (Ezek. 28:3).

And if your mind is exalted because of your many years, they are not as many as those of the chief of Tyre who led the kingdom (during) the days of the twenty-two kings of the house of Judah, whose years are four hundred and forty. Because the years of this king of Tyre were so many, all the time he said in his heart thus, "I am a god and I sit on the seat of God in the heart of the seas" (Ezek. 28:2).

However Ezekiel said to him, "You are a man and you are not God" (Ezek. 28:2). For when the chief of Tyre walked without defect between the stones of fire, there was mercy upon him. But when his heart was raised, an overshadowing cherub destroyed him (Ezek. 28:14, 16).

8. What are the stones of fire, if not the sons of Zion and the sons of Jerusalem? For in the former time, in the days of David and his son Solomon, Hiram was a friend to the house of Israel. When they were led away captive from their state, he rejoiced over them and stamped with his foot, not recalling the friendship of the house of David (Amos 1:9). And in that I said that the sons of Judah are called stones of fire, it was not from my own thought I said (it), but the prophet Jeremiah said it about them, for, when he lamented for them in the lamentations, he said, "The sons of Zion were better than the precious stones" (Lam. 4:2). He again said, "How the stones of the sanctuary have been thrown down at the head of all the streets?" (Lam. 4:1).

He (God) said again through the prophet, "They were holy stones which were cast down in his land" (Zech. 9:16). And in these stones a fire was burning as Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord was in my heart like a fire which burnt and kindling in my bones" (Jer. 20:9). And again He said to Jeremiah, "Behold, I put my word in your mouth (as) fire, and this people shall be as bits of wood" (Jer. 5:14). And he said again, "My words issue forth as fire and which cuts the stone as iron does" (Jer. 23:29). Because of this, Hiram the chief of Tyre, was walking among the prophets who were called stones of fire.

9. And again He (God) said to him, "You were with the anointed cherub that shelters" (Ezek. 28:14). Now the cherub was called the king who was anointed with the holy oil. And he was overshadowing upon all his

people as Jeremiah said, "The anointed of the Lord is the spirit of our nostrils, of whom we had said, under his shadow we shall live among the peoples" (Lam. 4:20). For they were sitting in the shadow of the king, when he was standing at their head. When the crown of their head fell down, they were without a protection. If a person will say that this word is said about Christ, let him accept the thing which I write to him without dispute, and let him be thus persuaded that this is said about the king. For Jeremiah said on behalf of the people, "Woe to us because the crown has fallen from our head" (Lam. 5:16). But Christ has not fallen, because he rose himself on the third day.

For the king who fell is from the house of Judah, and their kingdom has not again been established. And he said again that "The sheltering cherub will destroy him" (Ezek. 28:16). For as it is written, Nebuchadnezzar is the cherub who destroyed him "because he did a service in Tyre, but no wage was given to him from Tyre for his army; the land of Egypt was given to him for his work of Tyre" (Ezek. 29:18-19). But why no wage was given from Tyre to Nebuchadnezzar? Because its wealth went off into the sea and Nebuchadnezzar did not take it. At that time the overshadowing cherub, who is Nebuchadnezzar destroyed him. For there are two cherubs, one is the anointed and the overshadowing, another overshadowing, but not anointed. For he said above, "You were with the cherub who is anointed and overshadowing" (Ezek. 28:14). And he said below, "The sheltering cherub has destroyed you" (Ezek. 28:16). He did not say 'the anointed'. For Nebuchadnezzar was not anointed as David, Solomon and the other kings who were after them. And in what manner Nebuchadnezzar was called the sheltering, if not in the vision of the tree, when

he saw the tree in the centre of the earth, all the animals of the field dwelling under it and all the fowls of heaven resting on its high branches, and all flesh being nourished from it (Dan. 4:7-9).

As Daniel interpreted to him his dream, Daniel said to him "You are the tree, that tree which you saw in the centre of the earth, and all nations dwell under you" (Dan. 4:17, 19). Because of this he was the sheltering cherub, who destroyed the chief of Tyre, because he was gladdened at the children of Israel who were carried away into captivity from their land, and because his heart was magnified. This Tyre was also desolated for seventy years, just as Jerusalem which sat in desolation for seventy years. For Isaiah said about it, "Tyre shall go astray for seventy years just as the days of one king, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms that are on the face of the earth" (Isa. 23:15, 17).

10. O you, who are exalted and magnified, let not the pride of your heart lead you astray and say "I will climb up against the prosperous land and against the mighty beast". For the animal was not killed by means of the ram while its horns were broken. For the yearling goat broke the horns of the ram (Dan. 7:7). Now the yearling goat became a mighty beast. Because when the children of Japhet took the kingdom, they killed Darius, the Persian king. Now the fourth beast has devoured the third: and the children of Japhet are that third, and the children of Shem the fourth, they are the children of Esau.⁸⁶

Because when Daniel saw the vision of four beasts, he saw the first the children of Ham, the seed of Nimrod, who are the Babylonians. And the second is of the

86 According to the Rabbinical literature the children of Esau are considered as the Romans.

Persians and the Medes, who are the children of Japhet. And the third is of the Greeks, the brothers of the Medes. And the fourth is the children of Shem, who are the sons of Esau. For there was a fellowship between the children of Japhet and the children of Shem. And the leadership was taken away from the children of Japhet, the younger, and was given to Shem, the elder; and this goes on until today and (this will be) for ever. But when the time of the completion of the leadership of the children of Shem comes, the leader who came out from the children of Judah (Gen. 49:10) shall receive the kingdom, when he comes in his second coming.

11. For in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, when he saw that Daniel made known and demonstrated to Nebuchadnezzar, he saw the statue standing opposite to him (Dan. 2:31), with the head of the statue of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs and its feet of iron and of clay (Dan. 2:31-33). And Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are the head of gold" (Dan. 2:38). Why he was called the head of gold, if not because the word of Jeremiah fulfilled concerning him? For Jeremiah said, "Babylon is a cup of gold in the hand of the Lord, that gives drink to the whole earth from his wine" (Jer. 51:7). Babylon was also called the head of all kingdoms, as it is written, "Babylon was the head of the kingdom of Nimrod" (Gen. 10:10).

12. He said that "the breast and the arms of the statue were of silver" (Dan. 2:32). This demonstrated about the kingdom which is more lowly than it, which is that of Darius the Mede, because He (God) set the kingdom in balance. For the kingdom of the house of Nimrod was weighed in the balance and was found lacking; and being lacking, Darius received it. On account of this he said that his kingdom was lowly (Dan. 2:39).

And because it was lacking, the children of Media did not rule over the whole earth. The belly and the thighs of the image were of brass (Dan. 2:32). And he said that “the third kingdom shall rule over the whole earth” (Dan. 2:39), which is the kingdom of the children of Javan, who are (also) the children of Japhet. For it was against the kingdom of their brothers, that the children of Javan came in; because Madai and Javan are the sons of Japhet (Gen. 10:2). But Madai was foolish and too deficient to rule the kingdom, until his brother Javan came, who was wise and skilful, to destroy the kingdom; for Alexander, the son of Philip ruled over the whole earth.

13. And “the legs and the feet of the statue were of iron” (Dan. 2:33) which is the kingdom of the children of Shem, who are the children of Esau, which is strong as iron. He said, “Just as iron breaks and reduces to powder everything, so also the fourth kingdom shall break and tread under foot everything” (Dan. 2:40). It (the Scripture) explained clearly about the feet and the fingers, that part of them was of iron and part of them was of potter’s clay. For he said, “Thus they shall be mixed with the seed of man, and they will not cleave one to another as iron does not mix with clay” (Dan. 2:43). This he demonstrated about the fourth kingdom. For the kingdom of the sons of Esau had no king, (or) a son of a king existing to govern the kingdom, but when the sons of Esau were gathered together into a strong city and they made a senate, from there they appointed the head of the city, a wise man to govern the kingdom, lest when the governor of their kingdom weigh them, they might be found wanting, and the kingdom would be taken away from them as the kingdom of the sons of boastful Nimrod was taken away and was given to the sons of foolish Madai (Dan. 5:26-28). This king who was appointed, was destroying the

seed of that king who was before him, and they did not join together one another. But as regards the seed of the man which is compared with the clay, the meaning is thus: as soon as the king was chosen for the kingdom, he mixed himself with the root of the kingdom of iron (Dan. 2:41, 43).

14. And it (the Scripture) demonstrated that "In the days of those kings, who will rise in the kingdom, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom, which will not be destroyed or pass away for ever" (Dan. 2:44). This is the kingdom of Christ the King, which will make the fourth kingdom pass away. And it said above, "That you saw a stone, which was hewn out not by hands and it smote the statue upon its feet of iron and of clay, and broke them to pieces" (Dan. 2:34). And it did not say that it smote the image either on its head or on its breast and arms, or on its belly and thighs, but on its feet, because from the whole image, that stone will come and find only the feet: And it said in the following verse, "Iron and brass, silver and gold were broken together to pieces" (Dan. 2:35). For after them when Christ the King rules, then he will humble the fourth kingdom and will break the whole image. For the image refers to the whole world, its head is Nebuchadnezzar and its breast and arms the king of Media and Persia, its belly* and thighs the king of the Greeks, and its legs and feet the kingdom of the sons of Esau. The stone which smote the image and broke it to pieces and by which the whole earth was filled is the kingdom of Christ the King who will make an end to the kingdom of this world and he will rule for ever and ever.

15. Hear too about the vision of the four beasts that Daniel saw as they were coming up from the sea, differing one from the other (Dan. 7:3). This is the vision of them, "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I beheld that its wings were plucked off and it

stood upon its feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it" (Dan. 7:4). "The second beast was like a bear and it stood upon one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth" (Dan. 7:5). And the third beast was "like a leopard, and it had four wings and four heads" (Dan. 7:6). The fourth beast was "dreadful, mighty and exceedingly strong, and it had huge teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and it stamped with its feet whatever remained" (Dan. 7:7). Now the great sea which Daniel saw (Dan. 7:2) is this world and these four beasts are the four kingdoms of which indicated above.

16. For about the first beast, he said it was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. For the first beast is the kingdom of Babylon which is like a lion. For Jeremiah wrote saying thus, "Israel is a lost sheep. Lions have caused them to go astray. The first, the king of Assyria, devoured it. And this last, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon was stronger than him" (Jer. 50:17). Jeremiah called him a lion and said "He had the wings of an eagle" (Dan. 7:4). For it is written thus that when Nebuchadnezzar went out to the desert with the beasts, his hair grew like that of an eagle. He said, "I saw that its wings were plucked off and it stood upon its feet like a man and the heart of a man was given to it" (Dan. 7:4).

For first, in the vision of the statue, he was compared to gold, which is better than everything that is administered in the world.

In the vision of the beasts he was compared to a lion which is superior in its might to all other beasts.

He was compared again to an eagle which is more glorious than all other birds.

Whatever is written about him has been fulfilled in him. For the Lord said about him, "I have put a yoke of iron

upon the neck of all the nations, and they will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. I have even given him the beasts of the field and the birds of heaven to serve him" (Jer. 28:14; 25:11).

For when the king was like the head of gold, men served him like a king, and when he went out to the desert, the beasts served him as a lion.

When his hair was like that of an eagle, birds of heaven served him like an eagle.

When his heart was raised and he did not know that the power had been given to him from heaven, the yoke of iron was broken from the neck of the sons of men and he went out with the beasts, and instead of the heart of the king, the heart of a lion was given to him.

When he became exalted over the beasts, the heart of a lion was removed from him and the heart of a bird was given to him.

When wings emerged from him like those of an eagle he exalted himself over the birds, and then the wings were also pulled out and a lowly heart was given to him.

When he recognized that the Most High had power in the kingdom of man to give it to whom He wishes, then he sang praise as a man.

17. It said about the second beast that, "It was like a bear and it stood upon one side" (Dan. 7:5). Because when the kingdom of Media and Persia arose, it arose in the east. "And there were three ribs in its mouth" (Dan. 7:5). Because the ram was butting to the west, to the North, to the south, to the three winds of heaven, and he was holding these three winds. He butted, like the three ribs which were in the mouth of

the bear, until the yearling goat came out from the west, and smote the ram and snatched the ribs that were in his mouth.

18. It said about the third beast that it was like a leopard which had on its sides four wings of a bird, and this beast had four heads (Dan. 7:6). The third beast was indeed Alexander the Macedonian, for he was strong like a leopard. The four wings and four heads which the beast had were because he gave the kingdom to his four friends to rule after him. When he came, he killed Darius and reigned in the place of him.

19. The fourth beast, it said, was dreadful, mighty and exceedingly strong; it devoured, broke in pieces and trampled with its feet anything that remained (Dan. 7:7). Now this is the kingdom of the sons of Esau. Because after Alexander the Macedonian came to the throne, the kingdom of the Greeks came into being; Alexander also being from the Greeks. But the vision of the third beast was fulfilled in him, because the third and the fourth are one. Alexander ruled for twelve years, and there were kings of the Greeks after Alexander; the kings were seventeen and their years were two hundred and sixty-nine years from Seleucus Nicanor till Ptolemy. The Caesars were from Augustus till Philip Caesar,⁸⁷ twenty-seven kings, and their years are two hundred ninety-three years and eighteen years of Severus.

20. For, Daniel said, "I was considering closely the ten horns that were on the head of the beast; for, the ten horns were the ten kings who shall have arisen" (Dan. 7:8; 24), at that time till Antiochus. He said "a little horn came up from between these ten, and three fell away from

87 According to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius VI:34 Philip is the first Christian emperor.

before it" (Dan. 7:8). For, when Antiochus arose in the kingdom, he humbled three kings (Dan. 7:14) and exalted himself against the holy ones of the Most High and against Jerusalem. He polluted the sanctuary (2 Macc. 6:2-4), and he abolished the sacrifice and the offerings for a week and half of a week, which is ten and a half years. He brought fornicators into the house of the Lord (2 Macc. 6:4) and annulled the observances in the Law (2 Macc. 6:5). He killed righteous men and handed them over to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the earth. For in his days the word was fulfilled which David spoke, "O God, the Gentiles have come into your inheritance and have defiled your holy temple; they have made Jerusalem waste; they have given the corpses of your servants as food to the birds of heaven and the flesh of your righteous ones to the beasts of the earth. Their blood they have poured out like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them" (Ps. 79:1-3). For this was fulfilled in that time, when Eleazar, the old and aged man, was killed (2 Macc. 6:18-31), along with the seven sons of the blessed Shamuni; and when Judas and his brothers were fighting against for the sake of their people, when they were dwelling in hiding places (2 Macc. 5:27). "The horn made war with the saints at that time" (Dan. 7:21) and it got the better of their strength. Antiochus, the wicked man "spoke words against the Most High and changed times and seasons" (Dan. 7:25). He abolished the covenant of Abraham and made null and void the Sabbath of rest. He gave orders concerning the Jews that they should not circumcise. He (Daniel) said about him on this account, "He will think to change the times, the seasons and the laws; and they were given into his hand for a time, times, and a half" (Dan. 7:25). The time, and half a time is the week and a half, which is ten years and a half.

Again he (Daniel) said, "The judgement took its seat and they took away from him his dominion, to harm and to destroy him until the end of the kingdom" (Dan. 7:26). For the judgement came on Antiochus, a judgement from heaven (2 Macc. 9:5-12). He fell sick with an obstinate and evil disease; on account of his ill-smelling odour, no man came near to him, for worms were creeping and falling from him and eating his flesh, because he oppressed "the worm of Jacob" (Isa. 41:14). His flesh putrified in his lifetime because he caused the corpses of the children of Jerusalem to putrify and they were not buried (2 Macc. 9:5-10). He became polluted in his own eyes because he defiled the holy place of God. He prayed but he was not heard because he did not hear the groaning of the righteous ones whom he killed. He wrote, however, a letter and sent it to the Jews and called them 'my friends', but God did not have mercy on him, and he died in his torment (2 Macc. 9:28).

21. He said again, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom" (Dan. 7:27). What shall we say about this? Did the children of Israel receive the kingdom of the Most High? Far from it. Or did that people come upon the clouds of heaven? This left them behind. For Jeremiah said about them, "Call them rejected silver, because the Lord has rejected them" (Jer. 6:30). Again he said, "He will no more give heed to them" (Lam. 4:16). And Isaiah said about them, "Pass on, pass on, you should not come near to the unclean things" (Isa. 52:11). About the saints of the Most High he (Daniel) said about them thus, "They shall inherit the kingdom for ever" (Dan. 7:27). "For they rested a while from the burden of the kings and of the princes" (Hos. 8:10), that is after the death of Antiochus till sixty-two weeks were completed. Then the Son of Man came to set them free

and to gather them together, but “they did not receive him” (Jn. 1:11). For he came to get fruits from them but they did not give to him (Mt. 21:34), because their vines were “from the vine of Sodom and from the plant of Gomorrah” (Deut. 32:32). For the vineyard in it grew thorns and it bore wild grapes (Isa. 5:2). “Their wine became vinegar and their fruits bitter” (Deut. 32:32). The thorns cannot become tender; neither does vinegar turn into the nature of wine, nor is bitterness changed to a sweet nature.

22. For, Isaiah constituted beforehand the men from Judah as judges over them, for in them was planted a new and beloved planting. But these judges are those “who sit on the twelve seats and judge their twelve tribes” (Mt. 19:28). And he said to the judges thus, “Judge between me and my vineyard. O men judges, what more should have been done to my vineyard that I failed to do? Behold, I planted vineshoots”⁸⁸ but they became a strange vine. “I put a fence around it”, the Watchers of heaven and “built its tower”, the holy temple. “And I dug its winepress”, the baptism of the priests.⁸⁹ “I brought down rain upon it”, the words of my prophets. “I pruned it and ploughed it” from the works of the Amorites. “I waited, that it might bear grapes”, righteousness, “but it brought forth wild grapes”, iniquity and sin. I waited for (righteous) judgement but there was seizing by force, and for righteousness, but there was a wailing (Isa. 5:1-6; Jer.

88 The word used here for vineshoots is *šabbāqe* as in Jeremiah 2:21 and Isaiah 5:1 (P) and not *karmā*.

89 This quotation is from Isaiah 5:2 rather than from Mathew 21:33 or Mark 12:1; Aphr. follows here the order fence, tower and winepress as in Isaiah, and not fence, winepress and tower as in Mathew or Mark.

2:21). “Hear, men judges what I will do to my vineyard. I will break down its fence and it shall be trodden down. I will pull down its tower and it shall be for spoil. I shall make it to become a waste place because it brought forth wild grapes. Neither it shall be ploughed nor it shall be pruned, and in it shall grow up thorns and briars. I will command the clouds not to send down rain upon it” (Isa. 5:3-6).

For the Watchers of heaven have withdrawn from the fence of the vineyard. The tower, the strong house of their confidence has been pulled down. The winepress, the evacuation of their debts has been demolished. “When the vine was faultless, it was not suitable for working. But now that fire has devoured and destroyed it, how shall it be suitable for working? The fire has consumed both its branches, and its inward part laid waste” (Ezek. 15:4-5). For both its branches are the two kingdoms, and its inward part which has been laid waste is Jerusalem.

Many servants were sent to them by the Lord of the vineyard, and they killed them and did not send fruits to the Lord of the vineyard (Mt. 21:34-35). After the servants the Beloved Son was sent, to receive from them fruits and hand them over to him who sent him. And they seized him and cast him out of the vineyard and they cut spikes from the thorns of the vineyard and fixed them in his hands. He was hungry and sought food from them, but they took and gave to him something bitter from the fruit of the vineyard (Mt. 25:42).⁹⁰ He was thirsty and sought drink from them and they gave to him the

90 The passion story, as narrated by the Gospels does not specify that Christ was hungry and asked for food, or that he was given something bitter for his hunger by his executioners. It seems Aphr. treats Christ's thirst for drink on the cross (Mt. 27:34, 48) also as a request for food.

vinegar, but he did not wish to drink (Mt. 27:34).⁹¹ They plaited thorns which grew in the vineyard and placed them on the head of the Son of the Lord of the vineyard. For from the time the vineyard existed, it showed these fruits. Its Lord pulled it down and cast it in the fire. He planted good vines in the vineyard which give fruits and make glad the labourer. For Christ is the Vineyard and his Father is the Labourer (Jn. 15:1, 5)⁹² and the vines are those who drink of his cup. Therefore one vineyard came into being in the place of another vineyard. Again at his coming he handed over the kingdom to the Romans who were called the children of Esau. And these children of Esau will keep the kingdom for its giver.

23. The holy people who have been chosen in the place of the (former) people have become heirs to the eternal kingdom. "For he inflamed them to jealousy with a people who are not a people; he provoked them to anger with a foolish people" (Deut. 32:21; Rom. 10:19). He freed the holy people. For, behold, "he set free the whole covenant of God from the burden of kings and princes" (Hos. 8:10). For even if, a man served the pagans, as soon as he has come near to the covenant of God, he is free. But the Jews are serving in slavery among the Gentiles. So he said indeed about the saints; "They shall inherit the kingdom

91 Aphr. interprets the parable of the Wicked Tenants almost in the same way again in Dem. XX:8, joined together with the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), and the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32); "And he (poor man) was eagerly longing and groaning to receive fruits from them and hand them over to the one who sent him, but no man gave to him".

92 It seems the imagery of Christ as Vineyard and the Father as Labourer does not come from the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mt. 21:33-44; Mk. 12:1-11; Lk. 20:9-18); rather it is from John 15:1, where D reads (against S P) "I am the true Vineyard and my Father is the Labourer". R. Murray has given a detailed study on this topic, cf. *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 95 ff.

which is under the heaven" (Dan. 7:27). For if he said this about them (the Jews), why are they serving in slavery among the Gentiles? If they say, "it has not yet come about", then is the kingdom which is given to the Son of Man of the heaven or of the earth? See, the sons of the kingdom are already marked out and they have received their freedom from this world. For because it exists now, it is not willing to be enslaved to the power of the king who shall come and take his kingdom; but he will keep his pledges in honour because when he comes to abolish the kingdom, he will come upon them not in anger. For when he, to whom the kingdom belongs, comes (Gen. 49:10) at his second coming, he will take back what he has given, and he will become king for ever, and his kingdom will not pass away because it will be an eternal kingdom.

24. For at first He (God) gave the kingdom to the sons of Jacob and subjected the sons of Esau to them, as Isaac had said to Esau, "You shall serve Jacob, your brother" (Gen. 27:40). When they did not act diligently any more in the kingdom, he took it away from the sons of Jacob and gave it to the sons of Esau "until he comes, to whom it belongs" (Gen. 49:10).⁹³ They will hand over the charge to its giver and they will not refuse to return it in due time. The custodian of the kingdom is enslaved to him to whom everything is subjected (1 Cor. 15:28). Because of this, this kingdom of the sons of Esau will not be handed over into the hand of the gathered forces who want to go up against it, because the kingdom is being kept by its giver, and he will keep it.

Concerning what I have written to you, my beloved, that the kingdom of the sons of Esau is being

93 The sons of Esau are the Romans; for Aphr. the Roman power is not evil. He wants the Romans to win in the war with the Persians because they will give relief to his suffering Church.

kept by its giver, do not doubt about it for that kingdom will not be conquered, because a strong man whose name is Jesus will come in power and his weapons carry all the power of the kingdom. Investigate and see that he also inscribed among them through the census (Lk. 2:1-2). As he was enrolled among them through the census he will also assist them. His banner is great in that place and they are clothed his armour and they shall not be conquered in the war. Perhaps you should ask to me, "Why have they in the years of these early kings overpowered and enslaved the beast?". Because the princes and kings who arose at that time in the kingdom of the sons of Esau did not wish to lead with them to the war the man who inscribed with them through the census. Therefore the beast was enslaved a little, but it was not killed.

25. But these things which I have written to you, my beloved (and) what was written in (the book of) Daniel, I have not brought them to an end, but to this side of the end. If a man dispute about them, say to him thus, "These words are not sealed because the words of God are infinite and they will also be not sealed". For a foolish man says, "The words reach thus far. No more is it possible to add to them or to take away from them". Now the riches of God are neither reckoned nor limited. For if you take water from the sea, the loss is not known. And if you take sand from the shore of the sea, its number will not come short.

And if you count the stars of heaven, you will not arrive at their limit.

And if you light fire from a conflagration, nothing will be diminished at all.

And if you partake from the Spirit of Christ, Christ will lack nothing at all.

If Christ dwells in you, he is not (in) his full in you. If the sun enters through the windows of your house, the whole sun does not come to you.⁹⁴ All these things which I have enumerated to you have been created through the word of God. On this account you should know that no man attained to the word of God or will reach to its end. Therefore have no dispute with yourself about these things or say, “these are so, and it is sufficient”. But hear these things from me and also inquire about them from our brothers, the sons of our faith. For in the case of him who mocks at the words of his brother, you should not listen his words, even if he says, “mine are wiser”.

The reason I wrote to you concerning these armies that are striking to war, it was not as something revealed to me that I made known these things to you; but listen to the words at the beginning of the letter, that “Everyone who is exalted will be humbled” (Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11; 18:14). Even though the forces should go up and conquer, realize that it is a punishment of God. If they overcome, yet they be found guilty in a just judgement. But you should know this, that the beast shall be killed at its time. But you my brother, take pains in this time to seek for mercy, that there will be peace upon the people of God.

The end of the Demonstration on Wars

94 Aphr. uses the same examples in Dem. VI:11 in order to show that even though Christ and his Father are one and they dwell in many human beings, there are not multiple Gods and innumerable Christs.

VI

THE DEMONSTRATION ON THE SONS OF THE COVENANT

This Demonstration is an exhortation to the sons and daughters of the covenant. Section 1 stresses the need for preparedness and prudence on the part of the covenanters who are expectantly waiting for the sudden and surprise arrival of the Bridegroom. The expectation of the early Church of the sudden second coming of Christ is reflected here; delay in his coming should not cause the covenanters to live in laziness and imprudence. Satan is skilful and cunning in his fight against the covenanters. He fights with the valiant and tries to weaken them (section 2). Through the examples of the Old Testament leaders and patriarchs Aphrahat makes clear his theme, that it is through women that Satan fights against the sons of Adam. Therefore he prohibits the co-habitation of the sons and daughters of the covenant (sections 3-4). In section 5 he presents the examples of the prophets who were not ministered by women. He describes here a detailed list of benefits and advantages which the sons and daughters of the covenant have in the present time and will have at the eschaton. In historical time they were removed from the curses of the Law and the punishment of Eve's daughters. At the end of section 6 he makes a comparison between the adornment and the marriage customs of his time and those of the betrothed to Christ. In section 7 he exhorts those covenanters who may be in danger of breaking the vow of celibacy that the

virgins (both men and women) are betrothed to Christ and therefore they should serve him alone, otherwise he will dismiss him from his house. Section 8 presents a list of laws concerned with community life which are meant for the sons and daughters of the covenant. The covenanters have to take on the likeness of Christ who, being rich, made himself poor (section 9). In sections 10-12 he answers the question how Christ with his Spirit being one, dwells in many, adducing the examples of water, fire, dust and sun. He presents the prophets Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist who performed the signs by means of the Spirit whom they received in measured quantity, but our Saviour received the Spirit without measure and many are the signs which the Spirit of Christ has performed (section 13). Sections 14-18 deal with the pneumatology; here the role of Christ and the Spirit in the eschatology are also explained. He speaks once again about virginity in section 19 and asks the sons and daughters of the covenant that they should have a love for virginity which gives them a communion with the Watchers of heaven. He concludes this Demonstration in section 20 and asks his friend to pray for him.

1. The words which I speak are appropriate and fitting to be received.

For let us be aroused from our sleep at this time (Rom. 13:11) and raise our hearts along with our hands to heaven towards God.

Maybe all of a sudden the Lord of the house will come so that when he has come, he will find us in a state of wakefulness (Mt. 24:42).

Let us keep the appointed meeting with the Glorious Bridegroom⁹⁵

95 In the early Syriac Church the New Testament theme Christ as Bridegroom is popularly used.

so that we may enter with him to his bridal chamber⁹⁶
(Mt. 25:10).

Let us have oil ready for our lamps
so that we may go out to meet him in joy (Mt. 25:4).

Let us prepare provisions for our abode
(ready) for the road which is narrow and confined
(Mt. 7:14).

Let us take off and cast from us all filthiness
so that we may put on the wedding garments (Mt. 22:12).

Let us do trade with the money we have received
so that we may be called 'diligent servants'⁹⁷ (Mt. 25:21).

Let us be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12),
so that we may pass by the place of dread.

Let us purify our heart from evil/wickedness
so that we may see the Exalted One in his glory (Mt. 5:8).

Let us be merciful, as it is written, (Mt. 5:7; Lk. 6:36)
so that God may have mercy on us.

Let there be peace among us
so that we may be called 'brothers of Christ' (Mt. 5:9).

Let us be hungry for righteousness (Mt. 5:6)
so that we may have our fill from the Kingdom's table.

96 The Hebrew word *ḥuppah* which means bridal chamber or bridal canopy, is equivalent to the Syriac word *gnō nā*. *Ḥuppah* was the tent or room of the groom into which at the end of the betrothal period, the bride was brought in festive procession for the marital union. Cf. R. Posner, "*Ḥuppah*" in *EJ* XI, (Jerusalem, 1971), 1040, (s.v. Marriage). Aphr. uses the term *gnō nā* in the Dems VI:1, VII:25, IX:9, XIV:16, XIV:38 and in XXII:7.

97 Syriac writers quite often prefer *kašširā* (diligent) to denote the faithful servant of the parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14:30; Lk. 19:12-27) rather than *tā bā* and *mhaymnā*.

Let us be the true 'salt' (Mt. 5:13)
so that we do not become food for the serpent.

Let us keep our seed-lings clear of thorns
so that they may give fruit a hundredfold (Mt. 17:7-8;
Lk. 8:7-8).

Let us set our building upon rock
so that it is not shaken by winds and waves (Mt. 7:24-27).

Let us be vessels for his honour
so that we may be required by our Lord for his use
(2 Tim. 2:21).

Let us sell all that we possess
and buy for ourselves the pearl, so that we may become
rich (Mt. 13:46).

Let us lay up our treasures in heaven (Mt. 6:20; 10:21)
so that when we have gone, he may open to us and we
have delight.

Let us visit our Lord in the sick (Mt. 25:36)
so that he may call us to stand at his right hand (Mt. 25:33).

Let us hate ourselves and love Christ (Jn. 12:25)
just as he loved us and was delivered up for our sake
(Eph. 5:2).

Let us honour the Spirit of Christ
so that we may receive from him grace.

Let us be aliens from the world
just as Christ was not of it (Jn. 17:14).

Let us be humble and gentle
so that he may cause us to inherit the land of life (Mt. 5:5,
11:26; Isa. 38:11, 53:8).

Let us be constant in his service
so that he may serve us in the tent of the saints.

Let us pray his prayer in purity
so that it may enter before the Lord of Majesty.

Let us be sharers in his passion
so that in this way we may also have life at his
resurrection (Phil. 3:10; Gal. 6:17).

Let us carry his 'mark' on our bodies (Ezek. 9:4)
so that we may be delivered from the wrath which is to
come (1 The. 1:10).

For fearful is the day upon which he is coming,
and who is able to endure it? (Joe. 2:11; Mal.3:2)

Full of wrath and heated is his anger (Isa. 13:9),
and it will destroy all the wicked.

Let us place on our heads the helmet of salvation
(Eph. 6:17),
so that we may not be wounded and die in the battle.

Let us gird our loins in truth (Eph. 6:14)
so that we are not found to be feeble in the contest.

Let us get up and awaken Christ (Mt. 8:25-6)
so that he may still the storms from us.

Let us take as a shield against the Evil One
the preparedness of the Gospel of our Saviour (Eph. 6:16).

Let us receive from the Lord the authority
to trample upon snakes and scorpions (Lk. 10:19).

Let us cause anger to rest from us
along with all wrath and evil.

Let words of abuse not issue from our very mouths
(Jas. 3:9-10)
with which we pray to God.

Let us not be people who utter curses
so that we may be rescued from the curse of the Law
(Gal. 3:10).

Let us be diligent workers
so that we may demand our wages along with the first
(Mt. 20:1-16).

Let us take on the burden of the day
so that we can ask for an extra wage⁹⁸ (Mt. 20:1-16).

Let us not be idle workers
seeing that our Lord has hired us for his vineyard
(Mt. 20:1-16).

Let us be planted as vines in his vineyard,
for he is the true Vine(yard) (Jn. 15:1).

Let us become good vine plants (Jn. 15:6)
lest we be rooted up from the vineyard.

Let us be a sweet scent (2 Cor. 2:15)
so that the scent of us wafts to those round about us.

Let us be poor in the world
so that we may enrich many with the teaching of our Lord
(Jas. 2:5).

98 The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16) as analyzed here by Aphr. goes against the original message in two points. Firstly, those workers who came late, if they work diligently, can demand wages that are equal to those of the first. Secondly, those who have taken up the burden of the day can demand an extra wage, which means that the agreement they made with the master (Mt. 20:2) has no value. This aspect is well brought out later; thus, for example, we read in the Syrian Orthodox weekday prayers for *Sat. Ṣ apro* as follows: Those who have worked in his vineyard will ask for their wages and say to him, "Give us our wages, who have laboured from morning to evening". He will say to them "I will give you what I promised you, and I will add yet more: I will give you an open face at the resurrection". For the text see Monastery of St Ephrem, *Sheḥimo*, (Holland, 1981), 166-167.

Let us not call anyone our father,
so that we may be(come) children to the Father who is in
heaven (Mt. 23:9).

While having nothing,
we possess everything (2 Cor. 6:10).

While no one knows us
we ourselves have many friends (acquaintances).

Let us rejoice in our hope at all times (Rom. 12:12).
so that our Hope and our Saviour may rejoice in us.

Let us judge ourselves with uprightness and find
ourselves guilty (1 Cor. 11:31)
lest we have to bow our faces in the presence of the judges
who are seated upon the thrones and judge the Tribes
(Mt. 19:28).

Let us take for ourselves as armour for the struggle
the preparedness of the Gospel (Eph. 6:16).

Let us knock at the door of heaven
so that it may be opened before us and we can enter in it
(Mt. 7:7).

Let us ask for mercy insistently
so that we may receive as much as is needful for us
(Lk. 11:8).

Let us seek for the Kingdom and its righteousness
so that we may receive upon earth what is added
(Mt. 6:33).

Let us ponder upon what is above, on things of heaven,
and upon them let us meditate,
in the place where Christ has been raised up and exalted
(Col. 3:1-2).

Let us leave behind us the world which does not belong to us,
so that he may cause us to arrive at the place to which we have been invited.

Let us cause our eyes to fly up to the heights
so that we may see the Radiance (Zech. 3:8) which is going to be revealed.

Let us lift up our wings, like eagles,
so that we may see where the body is (Mt. 24:28).

Let us prepare as offerings for the King,
fair fruits consisting of fasting and prayer

Let us guard his surety (pledge) in purity.
so that he may entrust us over all his Treasury.

For the person who acts deceitfully with his surety
(pledge)
will not be allowed to enter his Treasury.

Let us be attentive to the Body of Christ,
so that our bodies may arise at the sound of the trumpet
(1 The. 4:16).

Let us listen to the voice of the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:6)
so that we may enter the Bridal Chamber with him.

Let us prepare the gift⁹⁹ for the wedding
and go out to meet him in joy (Mt. 25:6).

99 *Rumyā nā* means gift, especially wedding gift, but not dowry. According to the custom of the Jews both bride and bridegroom would exchange gifts after their engagement. They also received gifts from their friends and relatives. Cf. Ben-zion Schereschewsky, "Betrothal", in *EJ* IV, 753-757. Aphr. in his interpretation of the parable of the Ten Virgins utilizes the term *rumyā nā* to denote gifts of both kind.

Let us put on the holy raiment (Mt. 22:12)
and let us become guests, reclining among the chosen
(Lk. 14:10).

The person who is not wearing a (the) wedding garment,
they will cast him out into outer darkness (Mt. 22:13).

He who excuses himself from the wedding feast
will not taste of the banquet (Lk. 14:18, 24).

The person who prefers fields and trade
will be deprived of the city of the saints.

He who does not provide fruit inside the vineyard
will be rooted out and cast into torment (Lk. 13:6-9).

He who has received money from his master,
let him return it to its donor with its profit (Mt. 25:16, 27).

He who wishes to be a merchant
let him buy the field with a treasure in it (Mt. 13:44).

He who receives good seed
let him clear his ground from thorns (Mt. 13:7; Jer. 4:3).

He who wishes to become a fisherman,
let him be casting his net all the time (Mt. 13:47).

He who is trained in the athletic art (1 Cor. 9:24-5)
let him keep himself from the world.

He who wants to receive a crown (1 Cor. 9:24)
let him run in the contest as victor.

He who wants to enter (lit. fall) the stadium and fight
let him gain knowledge of his adversary.

He who wants to enter the battle
let him take for himself armour so that he can fight;
let him be polishing it all the time.

He who takes upon himself the likeness of the angels
(Mt. 22:30)

let him become a stranger to human beings.

He who takes upon himself the yoke of the 'continent'
(‘holy’)

let him keep money affairs far from himself.

He who seeks to gain his soul (Mt. 10:39)

let him keep far from himself worldly possessions.

He who yearns for a house in heaven,

let him not toil over a building of mud (brick) which will
fall down.

Whoever is waiting expectantly to be snatched up in the
clouds (1 The. 4:17)

should not arrange decorated carriages for himself.

Whoever is expectantly awaiting the marriage feast¹⁰⁰ of
the bridegroom

should not love the marriage feast that belongs to time.

Whoever wishes to take delight in the banquet that is
reserved

should keep drunkenness at a distance from himself.

Whoever has let himself be invited to the banquet

should not (then) excuse himself and become a merchant
(Lk. 14:18, 19).

The person in whom the good seed has fallen (Mt. 13:24-25)

should not allow the Evil One to sow tares in him.

Whoever has commenced on building a tower

should reckon all of its costs (Lk.14:28).

100 *Meštūtā* means literally 'drinking-party'.

It is appropriate that he who builds should complete (the work)

lest he (it) becomes a laughing stock to passers by (Lk. 14:29).

Whoever places his building on the rock
should make its foundations deep
so that it does not collapse as a result of the waves (Mt. 7:24-25).

Whoever wishes to escape from the darkness,
let him travel while he still has daylight (Jn. 12:35).

Whoever is afraid lest he has to flee in winter
let him prepare himself from the summer (onwards) (Mt. 24:20).

Whoever expectantly waits to enter into rest
let him prepare his expenses for that Sabbath (Heb. 4:9-11; Jn. 6:27).

Whoever seeks forgiveness from his Lord
should himself also forgive the person in debt to him (Mt. 18:24).

Whoever does not demand a hundred denarii (Mt. 18:24)
(will find) his Lord forgiving him ten thousand talents.

Whoever puts his master's money in the bank (Mt. 25:27)
will not be called a bad servant.

Whoever loves humility
will become an inheritor in the land of the living (life) (Mt. 5:5).

Whoever wishes to make peace
will become one of the children of God (Mt. 5:9).

Whoever knows his master's will
let him do his will
lest he be beaten a great deal (Lk. 12:47).

Whoever purifies his heart from deceit (Mt. 5:8)
 'that person's eyes will behold the King in his beauty'
 (Isa. 33:17).

Whoever receives the Spirit of Christ
 should adorn his inner person (Lk. 11:25; Rom. 7:22).

Whoever has been called 'the Temple of God' (1 Cor.
 3:16, 17)
 should purify his body of all uncleanness.

Whoever grieves the Spirit of Christ (Eph. 4:30)
 will not raise up his head from griefs (Ps. 110:7).

Whoever receives the Body of Christ,
 let him keep his own body from all uncleanness.

Whoever is stripping off the 'old person'
 let him not return again to his former deeds (Eph. 4:22).

Whoever is putting on the 'new person' (Eph. 4:24)
 let him guard himself against all impurity (filthiness).

Whoever has put on armour from the (baptismal) water,
 let him not take off his armour
 lest he finds himself defeated.

Whoever is taking a shield against the Evil One
 (Eph. 6:16)
 let him guard himself against the arrows he will shoot at
 him.

With the person who gets dispirited (Heb. 10:38)
 his Lord will not want him.

Whoever ponders on the Law of his Lord
 will not be perturbed by the cares of this world.

Whoever meditates on the Law of his Lord
 resembles the tree planted by the water (Ps. 1:1, 3).

The person whose confidence is in the Lord again resembles the tree which is firmly (planted) by a stream (Jer. 17:7, 8).

Whoever puts his confidence in a human being will receive Jeremiah's curses (Jer. 17:5).

Whoever has been invited by the Bridegroom should make himself ready (Mt. 22:1-6).

Whoever has lit his lampstand (candelabra) (Mt. 25:7-8) should not let the light go out.

Whoever is expectantly waiting the shout (Mt. 25:6) let him take for himself oil in his vessel (container).

Whoever is guarding the door (Mt. 25) let him wait expectantly for his Lord.

Whoever loves virginity will be likened to Elijah.

Whoever takes on the yoke (Mt. 11:29-30; Lam. 3:27) of the holy (continent), let him sit down in silence (Lam. 3:27-28).

Whoever loves stillness, let him wait expectantly for the Lord, the hope of salvation (life) (Tit. 2:13).

2. My beloved, our Adversary is skilful and cunning in his fight against us. He is at the ready against the valiant and the glorious, in order to get them to weaken. The feeble are his anyhow, and he does not (need to) fight with people he has already taken captive!

Whoever possesses wings will fly off from him without the arrows aimed at him reaching him. Spiritual people can see him as he fights, and his weapon has no power over their bodies. All the children of light have no fear of him, seeing that darkness flees from the

presence of illumination (1 Jn. 2:8). The children of the Good (God) are not afraid of the Evil One, for (God) has given him to be trampled under their feet (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 91:13; Lk. 10:19). When he takes on the semblance of darkness to them, they themselves become light; and when he creeps up to them like a snake, they become salt (Mt. 5:14), something which he cannot eat.

And if he takes on the semblance of an asp, they become like young children (Isa. 11:8). Or if he makes his incursion against them by means of a yearning for food, they vanquish him with fasting, as did our Saviour (Mt. 4:2-4). Or if he desires to fight with them by means of the eyes' lust (1 Jn. 2:16), they lift up their eyes to the heights of heaven. Or if he wants to overcome them by using blandishments, they do not pay him any attention (turn a deaf ear to him). And if he wants to fight against them openly, then clothed in armour, they take their stand against him. And if he desires to make his incursion against them by means of sleep, they stay awake and keep vigil, singing (psalms) and praying. And should he entice them through possessions, they (simply) hand these over to the poor. And if he makes his incursion against them under the guise of something sweet, they do not taste it, realizing that it is bitter. And if he should incite them through lust for Eve, they live by themselves and not in the company of the daughters of Eve.

3. (Satan) made his incursion on Adam by means of Eve, and in his childishness Adam was beguiled (Gen. 3:1-7).

He again made his incursion against Joseph (Gen. 39:7-20) by means of the wife of his master, but Joseph recognized his cunning and refused to pay any attention to him.

It was by using a woman that he fought against Samson until he (succeeded in) taking away his nazirite status (Jud. 16:4-32).

Reuben was the oldest of all his brothers, and it was through his father's wife that (Satan) cast (imposed) (his) foul mark on him (Gen. 35:21-22; 49:3-4).

Aaron was high priest in Israel, but it was because of Miriam his sister that he became jealous of Moses (Num. 12:1-2).

Moses was sent to deliver the people from Egypt, and he took with him a woman who gave (him) hateful advice, with the result that the Lord encountered Moses, and wanted to kill him (Ex. 4:24-6), until he (decided to) return his wife to Midian (Ex. 18:2-3).

David conquered in all his battles, but it was because of a daughter of Eve that blemish was found in him (2 Sam. 11).

Amnon was handsome and fair of face, and the (Evil One) bound him with lust for his sister, with the result that Absalom killed him in return for the dishonour to Tamar (2 Sam. 13).

Solomon was greater than all the kings of the earth, but in the days of his old age his wives led his heart astray (1 Kgs. 11:1-13; Sir. 47:19-20).

Due to Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the iniquity of Ahab increased, and he acted most foully (1 Kgs. 21:25).

Again, (Satan) tried (tempted) Job by means of his children and his possessions (Job 1-2); then, being unable to get dominion over him, he went and brought against him his weaponry, bringing along with him a daughter of Eve who had caused Adam to sink; and through her mouth he said to Job, the just man, 'Revile God' (Job 2:9), but Job rejected her counsel.

King Asa also vanquished (Satan whose) life is accursed, when the latter wanted to attack him through his mother. For Asa recognized his cunning and so removed his mother from her high position, cut down her idol and threw (it to the ground) (1 Kgs. 15:13; 2 Chr. 15:16).

Take the case of John, the greatest of all the prophets; Herod had him killed because of the dancing of one of Eve's daughters.

Haman was rich, and the king's third in command: his wife counselled him to destroy the Jews (Est. 5:9-14).

Zimri was a chief of the tribe of Simeon, yet Cozbi, a daughter of the chiefs of Midian ruined him, with the result that because of a single woman twenty-four thousand fell from Israel in a single day (Num. 26:6-25).

4. Therefore, my brethren, any man who is a *bar qyṭmṭ* or a *qaddišṭ* who loves *ih idṭyutṭ* and wants a woman, who is a *bat qyṭmṭ* like him, to live with him, in such a case it is better that he should take a wife openly and not be unrestrained in lust (1 Cor. 7:9). Likewise, in the case of a woman, it is appropriate for her, if she is not going to separate from a man who is an *ihidṭyṭ*, to be openly with a husband. It is fitting that a woman should live with (another) woman, and a man ought to live with (another) man. Even in the case of a man who wants to live in *qaddišutṭ*,¹⁰¹ his spouse should not live with him, lest he revert to his former natural state (1 Cor. 7:8), and he be accounted an adulterer. Therefore, this advice which I apply to myself is fitting, proper and right for you as well, my beloved *ih idṭye* who do not take wives, and (you) virgins who are not with husbands, and those

101 Aphr. uses the term *qaddišutā* to denote the holiness obtained through sexual abstinence by persons even though they are married.

who love *qaddišut*⌘: it is right, proper and fitting that a person should be alone even if it is in affliction (distress); and in this way it is fitting for him to live in accordance with what is written in Jeremiah, the prophet: "Blessed is the man who shall take your yoke in his youth, and sit down and be silent, because he has received upon himself your yoke" (Lam. 3:27-28). For, in this way, my beloved it is fitting that the person who takes up the yoke of Christ (Mt. 11:29-30) should preserve his yoke in purity.

5. For it is written thus concerning Moses, my beloved, that ever since the time that the Holy One was revealed over him (Ex. 3:2) he too loved *qaddišut*⌘. And ever since the time he was consecrated his wife did not minister to him; instead, it is written as follows, "Joshua, son of Nun, was the minister to Moses from his youth (childhood)" (Ex. 33:11; Num. 11:28). And concerning Joshua it is furthermore written as follows: "he never used to depart from the tent" (Ex. 33:11). Now the temporal tent was not ministered to by a woman, because the Law did not permit women to enter the temporal tent; rather it was the case that, even when they came to pray, they would pray at the door of the tabernacle (Ex. 38:8) and then return. (The Law) also prescribed that the priests should be (live) in *qaddišut*⌘ during their period of ministering, and they should not know their wives.

Similarly, in the case of Elijah it is written that he would sometimes reside on mount Carmel, and sometimes in the ravine of the Kerith (1 Kgs. 17:2-6), being ministered to by his disciple. And because his heart was in heaven, birds of the heaven used to bring him sustenance. And because he had taken upon himself the likeness of the Watchers of heaven, these very Watchers brought him bread and water when he was fleeing from Jezebel's presence (1 Kgs. 19:5-7). And because he laid

all his concern in heaven, he was snatched up in a chariot of fire to heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11-12), and that became his abode for ever.

Elisha also walked in his master's footsteps, and lived in the upper room of the Shilomite (Shunamite) woman, being ministered to by his disciple. Thus the Shilomite woman said, "The prophet of God is 'holy', and he passes by us all the time. For in this way it is fitting for his *qaddišutā* that we should make (ready for) him the upper room and the service in it" (2 Kgs. 4:4-10). And what did the 'service' in Elisha's upper room consist of, apart from only a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp?

What can we say about John, who did not live among (other) human beings either; he preserved virginity in purity, and received the spirit of Elijah.

The blessed Apostle also said of himself and of Barnabas, "Is it not authorized for us to eat and drink and also women to go around with us? But this is not fitting or right" (1 Cor. 9:4-5).

6. For this reason, our brothers, we recognize and have seen how from the beginning (of creation) the enemy used woman as a means of his entry against humanity; and to the very end he carries out (his deeds) by means of her. For she serves as Satan's weapon, and using her he fights against "the athletes". Through (by means of) her he sings all the time, since she became his lyre from the very first day. On account of her the Law's curse was imposed; and on account of her the promise was made of death: for in pains she gives birth to children (Gen. 3:16), handing them over to death. On account of her the earth was cursed, so that it caused thorns and thistles to sprout up (Gen. 3:17-18).

Henceforth, at the advent of the Child of the blessed Mary,
 the thorns are uprooted,
 the sweat is removed,
 the fig-tree is cursed (Mt.21:19; Gen.3:19),
 the dust is made into salt (Mt. 5:13),
 the curse has been affixed to the cross (Col. 2:14),
 the sharp sword (blade) has been removed from before
 the tree of life (Gen. 3:24),
 (and the Tree) has been given as food to the faithful.
 While Paradise has been promised to the blessed, to both
 virgins and *qaddiše*,
 and the fruits of the Tree of Life have been given as food
 to the faithful,
 and to the Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13) who do the will of God,
 the door has been opened (Mt. 7:13-14),
 and the path lies trodden out,
 and the fountain flows (Jn. 7:37-38) giving water to the
 thirsty,
 the table is set out (Ps. 23:5; Mt. 22:4),
 and the banquet is ready,
 the fatted ox has been slain,
 and the 'cup of salvation' is mixed (Ps. 116:13),
 enjoyment has been prepared,¹⁰²
 and the Bridegroom is close at hand to take his place,

102 This passage alludes to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a banquet which anticipates the eschatological banquet which will be realized only in the Kingdom.

the Apostles have sent invitations,
and those invited are many indeed (Mt. 22:10; Lk. 14:16).
You who are chosen, prepare yourselves;
Light has shone out, resplendent and beautiful,
garments not made by (human) hands are in readiness,
the cry (call) is close at hand,
the graves are opened (Mt. 25:6; 27:52),
the treasure stores are being revealed,
the dead arise
and the living take flight to meet the King (1 The. 4:17).
The feast is set out,
the horn gives courage,
the trumpets urge haste (1 Cor. 15:52),
the Watchers of heaven come quickly,
the throne is set out for the Judge:
He who has laboured will rejoice (Mt. 24:31),
he who has been slack will be in fear.
He who has done wrong will not approach the Judge.
The children of the right hand exult,
but those on the left weep and wail.
Those in the light are resplendent,
those in the darkness groan out that their tongue be
wetted (Lk. 16:24).
Grace moves on, and uprightness reigns:
no repentance exists in that place.

Winter is close at hand, and the summer has passed on.

The Sabbath of rest is coming, labour is ceasing.

Night is coming to an end, and the day reigns.

The sting of death is broken, and is swallowed up in life (1 Cor. 15:54-56).

Those who return to Sheol weep and gnash their teeth (Lk. 13:28),

and those who go to the kingdom rejoice, exult, leap for joy and give praise.

Those who do not take wives are ministered to by the Watchers of heaven.

Those who preserve *qaddišut* find rest in the sanctuary of the Most High.

The *Iḥ iḏy* who is from his Father's womb (Jn. 1:18) gives joy to all the *iḥ iḏye*.

There is no male or female there, no servant or freeborn (Lk. 6:35; Gal. 3:28),

rather, all are children of the Most High,

and all the pure virgins who are betrothed to Christ will have their lamps shining brightly

there as they enter, with the Bridegroom, to his bridal chamber (Mt. 25:7-10).

All those who are betrothed to Christ are far removed from the curse of the Law, and they are delivered from the punishment of Eve's daughters.

For they do not have husbands, or (as a result) receive the curses and be in pains;

they do not reckon death (to be anything) because they do not hand over children to him.

Instead of a husband who dies, they are betrothed to Christ,

“And because they do not give birth to children, they are given a name that is better than sons and daughters” (Isa. 56:5).

Instead of the lamentations of Eve’s daughters, these women will utter the Bridegroom’s songs.

The wedding feast for Eve’s daughters lasts seven days, but in the case of these women, their Bridegroom never departs.¹⁰³

The adornment of Eve’s daughters consists of wool which wears out and is eaten away, but in the case of these women, their garments never wear out.¹⁰⁴

Old age causes the beauty of Eve’s daughters to fade, but the beauty of these women is renewed at the time of the resurrection.

7. O Virgins who have betrothed your souls to Christ, when one of the *bn̄y qyā m̄* says to one of you, “I will live with you, you minister to me”, you should reply, “I am betrothed to a man who is King, and it is him to whom I am ministering; If I leave (this) ministry to him

103 In the time of the Talmud the marriage celebrations of a virgin lasted for seven days which, for the bride and groom, had something of the status of a religious holiday. The marriage benedictions were recited at meals and neither bride nor groom was allowed to mourn. Cf. R. Posner, “Marriage Ceremony: in the Talmud”, in *EJ* XI, 1034-35 (s. v. ‘Marriage’).

104 Aphr. makes a comparison between the adornment and marriage customs of his time and those of the betrothed to Christ. According to the Mishnah, a bride is supposed to wear a crown. It may be made of gold, silver, expensive cloth or skins. Cf. L. I. Rabinowitz, “Crown, Decorative Headdresses and Wreaths”, in *EJ* V, 1130.

and I minister to you (instead), then my betrothed will become angry with me, write a letter of divorce, and dismiss me from his house. If you want to be held in honour by me, and I too (want) to be held in honour by you, (take care) to prevent harm coming to both me and you: do not put fire in your lap lest you burn your clothes (Prov. 6:27-8). Rather remain alone in honourable state, and I too will be alone in my honourable state. Make yourself a wedding gift out of the things which the Bridegroom has prepared for the eternity of his wedding feast, and prepare yourself to meet him; I, in turn, will make ready the oil so that I may enter with the wise virgins, and not be kept back outside the door along with the foolish virgins" (Mt. 25:1-12).

8. Listen, therefore, my beloved, to what I am writing to you about - matters that are appropriate for *ihidṭye, bnay qyṭmṭ*, virgins (both male and female) and *qaddiše*. Above all else, it is appropriate that the man upon whom the yoke (of Christ) is laid should have a sound (firm) faith, in accordance with what I wrote to you in the first letter; he should be assiduous in fasting and in prayer, he should be fervent in the love of Christ, he should be humble, composed and alert; his speech should be gentle and kind, he should be sincere-minded with everyone, he should speak (carefully) weighing his words, he should make a fence (barrier) for his mouth against any harmful words, he should distance himself from hasty laughter, he should not have a liking for finery in clothing, nor again should he let his hair grow (long) and adorn it; it is not appropriate for him to use on it scented unguents, nor should he take a seat at banquets. It is not appropriate for him to wear ornate clothing, nor should he impetuously go too far (in drinking) wine.

He should banish any haughty thought, and it is inappropriate for him to see ornate clothing, or to wear veils. He should rid himself of deceitful speech (lit. tongue), and remove from himself overzealousness and quarrelsomeness; he should banish from himself deceitful words (lit. lips), and let him not listen to, or accept without first investigating any words spoken against someone who is not present, lest (otherwise) he will fall into sin. Jeering is an odious fault, and it is not appropriate that it should reach the heart. He should not lend and receive interest, and he should not love greed.

Let him be wronged, rather than wrong (someone). Let him also keep away from commotion, and let him not utter any scurrilous words.

Let him not scoff at a person who repents of his sins, or mock at his brother who is fasting. Nor should he make someone who is unable to fast feel ashamed.

Let him give reproof, where he will be accepted, but where people do not accept him, let him recognize his own dignity.

Let him speak on the occasion when his words will be accepted; otherwise he should remain in silence.

He should not reprove (despise) himself because of his stomach's requests, and let him reveal his secret to the person who fears God, but let him guard himself against the Evil One. He should not say anything in reply to a bad man, not even to his enemy. In this way let him strive not to have any enemy at all.

When people are indignant with him over something good, let him simply add to his good action, and not feel harmed because of jealousy (the indignation).

When he has something and gives it to the poor let him rejoice. When he has nothing let him not be sad.

Let him have no association with an evil person, and let him not speak with an abusive man lest he give himself over to abuse (Prov. 1:10-12; Sir. 11:33-34).

Let him not argue with a blasphemer, lest his Lord be reviled as a result of him.

Let him keep false accusation at a distance and let him not seek to please any person at all through flattery.

These are the things appropriate for *iḥ idṭye* who are receiving the heavenly yoke, and are becoming disciples to Christ. For thus it is appropriate for the disciples of Christ to imitate Christ their Master.

9. Let us take on the likeness from our Saviour, my beloved: being rich, he made himself poor (2 Cor. 8:9).

Though he was exalted, he brought low his Majesty (greatness).

Though his abode was in the heights, there was nowhere for him to lay his head (Mt.8:20).

Though he was going to come (Dan. 7:13) on the clouds (Mt. 26:64), he rode on an ass (Jn. 12:15) and (so) entered Jerusalem.

Though he is God, the son of God, he took the likeness of a servant (Phil. 2:7).

Though he was the resting place from all labours, yet he became weary from the labour of the journey (Jn. 4:6).

Though he was a fountain which assuages thirst, he became thirsty and asked for water to drink (Jn. 4:7).

Though he is satiety and has satisfied our hunger (in plenty), (yet) he hungered and went out to the wilderness to be tempted (Mt. 4:2).

Though he was the Watchful One who does not slumber (Ps. 121:4), yet he slumbered and slept in the boat in the midst of the sea (Mt. 8:24).

Though he was someone ministered to in the Tabernacle of his Father, he was ministered to by the hands of human beings.

Though he was the physician of all sick human beings, yet nails were fixed in his hands (Mt. 9:12; Ps. 22:17).

Though his mouth uttered (only) good, (yet) they gave him bitter food to eat (Ps. 69:22; Mt. 27:34).

Though he neither hurt nor harmed anyone, he was struck by blows and endured ignominy (Mt. 26:67, 26:30).

Though he is Saviour (Life giver) of all the mortals, he handed himself over to death on the cross.

10. So great a humility did our Saviour (Life giver) manifest to us in himself! Let us therefore as well make ourselves humble, my beloved. When our Lord came, he went about in our nature (condition), but outside his (true) nature (condition). Let us remain in our (true) condition, so that on the day of justice he will make us share in his condition. Our Lord took from us a pledge, and went off (2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Eph. 1:14) and he left for us a pledge that comes from him, and was raised up. He who had no need proved to be the means for fulfilling our need. What belongs to us was his from the very beginning, but as for what belongs to him, who (else) could have given to us? For it is true what our Lord promised us: "Where I am, you too shall be" (Jn 14:3) - because what he has taken from us is (placed) in honour with him, and a crown is set upon his head (Heb. 2:9). Likewise we should hold in honour what we have received of his: what belongs to us is held in honour with

him, though it is not now existing in our nature (condition). Let us honour what belongs to him which is in its nature. If we hold him in honour, we will go to him, since he took of what belonged to us and ascended.

But if we despise him, he will take away from us what he has given to us. And if we disdain his pledge, (then) there he will take what belongs to himself, and deprive us of what he promised to us. Let us magnify the King's Son who is with us properly, for a hostage has been taken away from us on his behalf. Whoever holds the King's Son in honour will discover many gifts (emanating) from the King.

What belongs to us which is now with him sits (there) in honour, with a crown set upon his head, and he has seated him with the King. But as for us who are so poor, what can we do for the King's Son who is with us? Nothing else is required by him of us except that we should adorn our temples for him, so that when the time is completed and he goes to his Father, he may acknowledge him, from us, because we have held him in honour. When he came to us, he did not have anything of ours, nor did we have anything of his, though the two natures belonged to him and his Father.

Now when Gabriel announced to the blessed Mary who gave him birth, the Word set off (he brought word) from the height and came, "and the word became body and dwelt in us" (Jn. 1:14). And when he went (back) to his sender, he took off what he had not brought, as the Apostle said "He has raised us up and caused us to sit with him in heaven" (Eph. 2:6). And when he went to his Father, he sent us his Spirit, telling us "I am with you until the world comes to an end" (Mt. 28:20). For Christ is seated at the right hand of his Father, and Christ dwells in human beings.

He is capable (of being) above and below through the wisdom of his Father, and he dwells in many, while yet being one, and he overshadows all the faithful each with a portion of himself, without his being diminished, as is written "I will divide him up among many" (Isa. 53:12). Even though he is divided up among many, he is seated at the right hand of his Father (Mk.16:19; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 10:12). And he is in us and we are in him, just as he said "you are in me and I am in you" (Jn. 14:20), and in another place he said "I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30).

11. If someone with a conscience weak in understanding should argue against this and say that since Christ is one, and his Father is one, how can Christ and his Father dwell in human beings who are believers? And how can the just (among) human beings become temples for God, in which he dwells? If this is then the case, and Christ has individually come to each individual human beings who is a believer, along with God who is in Christ- if this is so, then there turn out to be multiple gods and innumerable Christs!

Listen, my beloved, to the refutation that needs (to be made). Let the person who has said this be persuaded from a visible example: Everyone is aware that the sun is fixed in the sky, and its rays are spread out over the earth; something of it enters the many doors and windows of houses, and wherever the sunlight falls- even if it (only covers) the palm of the hand- it is called 'sun'. Though (while) falling on many different places it is called by this name, yet the sun itself is in heaven. If this is then the case, have there turned out to be many suns? Likewise the waters of the sea are vast, and (yet) when you take a bowlful from them it is (still) called 'water' and when you divide this water up into thousand vessels, it still retains the name 'water'.

Likewise, when you kindle fire in many different places, (starting) from one (source of) fire, the source from which you take the fire to kindle others does not diminish, and it is (all) called by the single name 'fire': just because you divide (the fire) up in many different places, it does not take on a plurality of names. And when you take dust from the earth and scatter it in many different places, the dust does not loose anything; nor can you speak of it as plural.

Similarly in the case of God and his Christ, while being one, nevertheless they dwell in many human beings, while they themselves are in heaven, they do not loose anything by dwelling in many (people), just as the sun in heaven does not loose anything when its power resides on earth. Is not the power of God so much greater seeing that the sun itself exists by the power of God!

12. I would remind you once again, my beloved, of what is written (in Scripture), for it is written as follows; (telling) how, when it was proving too onerous for Moses to guide the (Israelite) camp by himself, the Lord said to him: "I will take a little of the spirit which is upon you and I will give (it) to the seventy men (who are) the elders of Israel" (Num. 11:17). When he had taken a little of the spirit of Moses and the seventy men had been filled with it, Moses did not lack anything, nor was his spirit recognised as having had a little taken from it.

The blessed Apostle also said "God has divided up of the spirit of his Christ and sent it among the prophets"¹⁰⁵ - but Christ was not harmed in any way, "for

¹⁰⁵ This is from the apocryphal letter III Corinthians 3:10. Though this was once considered canonical in the early Syriac Church, it was later dropped, and its text is now known only from an early papyrus and from Armenian, Coptic and Latin translations. Ephrem included it in his Commentary on the Pauline Epistles.

his Father did not give him the Spirit using a measure" (Jn. 3:34). In this sense you be convinced that Christ dwells in human beings (who are) believers, without his suffering any harm by being divided up among many.

For it is from the spirit of Christ that the prophets received, each of them in so far as he was able to bear; and what is being poured out today on all flesh is from the spirit of this same Christ, with the result that sons and daughters, old and young, servants and maid servants are prophesying (Act. 2:17-18; Joe. 3:1-2).

Something from Christ is in us, while Christ is (also) in heaven at the right hand of his Father (Eph. 1:20). Christ did not receive the spirit in a measured quantity; rather his Father, in His love for him, handed over everything into his hands, giving him authority over His entire treasury. For John said "It was not in a measured quantity that the Father gave the Spirit to his Son, but in his love for him he has handed over everything into his hands" (Jn. 3:33-34). Our Lord too said "Everything has been handed over to me by my Father" (Mt. 11:27). And again he said "The Father will not judge anyone, but will give all judgement to his Son" (Jn. 5:22). The Apostle too said "Everything shall be subjected to Christ apart from his Father, who has subjected everything to him. And once everything has been subjected to him by his Father, then he too will be subjected to God his Father who had subjected everything to him, and God will be all in all and in everyone" (1 Cor. 15:27-8).

13. Concerning John our Lord testifies how he is greater than the prophets (Mt. 11:9-11), but he received the spirit in measured quantity, since John partook of the spirit in the same measure that Elijah received. Just as Elijah dwelt in the wilderness, so too the Spirit of God took John and he was dwelling in the wilderness and on

the mountains and in the caves. Birds nourished Elijah, whereas John ate flying locusts (1 Kgs. 17:6; Mt. 3:4), Elijah wore a leather girdle around his waist, and John wore a leather strap around his waist (2 Kgs. 1:8; Mt. 3:4). Elijah was persecuted by Jezebel, and John was persecuted by Herodia (1 Kgs. 19:1-2; Mk. 6:19).

Elijah rebuked Ahab, and John rebuked Herod (1 Kgs. 18:17, 21:17-24; Mk. 6:18; Lk. 3:19). Elijah divided Jordan (2 Kgs. 2:8), and John opened up baptism. Elijah's spirit resided in a double measure on Elisha (2 Kgs. 2:9); while John laid his hand upon our Saviour, and he received the Spirit without measure. Elijah opened up the heaven and ascended (2 Kgs. 2:11), while John saw the heaven opened and the spirit of God descending and residing on our Saviour (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:33). Elisha received Elijah's spirit twofold (2 Kgs. 2:9), while our Saviour received both from John and from heaven.

Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah (2 Kgs. 2:13), while our Saviour (took up) the laying on of the hands of priests. Elisha made oil from water (2 Kgs. 4:1-7), while our Saviour made wine from water (Jn. 2:1-11). Elisha satisfied (the hunger) of only a hundred men by means of a little bread (2 Kgs. 4:42-44), while our Saviour (again) with a little bread satisfied five thousand men, apart from children and women (Mt. 14:21). Elisha cleansed Naaman the leaper (2 Kgs. 5:1-14), while our Saviour cleansed ten (leapers) (Lk. 17:12-19).

Elisha cursed some children and they were devoured by bears (2 Kgs. 2:23-24), while our Saviour blessed the children (Mk. 10:16). Elisha was reviled by the children (2 Kgs. 2:23), while our Saviour received praise with hosannas from the children (Mt. 21:15-16). Elisha cursed Gehazi his disciple (2 Kgs. 5:27), and our

Saviour cursed Judas his disciple (Mt. 26:24), but blessed all his (other) disciples (Lk. 24:50). Elisha revived only one dead person (2 Kgs. 4:32-35), where as our Saviour revived three. In Elisha's case, a single dead person came alive by means of his bones (2 Kgs. 13:21), while our Saviour, when he descended to the abode of the dead, revived many and resurrected them. Many are the signs which the spirit of Christ has performed - (the same spirit) from which the prophets had received.

14. Accordingly we too, my beloved, have received of Christ's Spirit, and Christ dwells in us, as it is written how the Spirit spoke through the prophet's mouth, saying "I will dwell (Isa. 66:2; Lev. 26:11) in them and go about in them" (Ezek. 36:12, 26:12).

Let us therefore from now on make ready our 'temples' for the Spirit of Christ, and not grieve her, lest she depart from us. Recall how the Apostle warns you "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, with whom you have been sealed for the day of salvation" (Eph. 4:30). Now it is from baptism that we receive the Spirit of Christ: for at that moment when the priests invoke the Spirit, (the Spirit) opens up the heavens, descends and hovers over the water (Gen. 1:2), while those who are being baptised clothe themselves in her. The Spirit remains distant from all who are of bodily birth until they come to the birth (that belongs to the baptismal) water: only then do they receive the Holy Spirit. For at (their) first birth they are born with an animate spirit which is created inside a person, which is furthermore immortal, as it is said "Adam became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45). And at the second birth, which occurs at baptism, they receive the Holy Spirit, from a portion of divinity and this too is immortal.

Now when people die the animate spirit is buried away with the body, and sense perception is removed

from the latter, but the heavenly Spirit which we received returns to its natural state with Christ. These two (kinds of Spirit) were indicated by the Apostle, who said: "The body is buried away according to the way of the soul (1 Cor. 15:44), whereas it rises according to the way of the Spirit". And the Spirit reverts to Christ, to its natural state. The Apostle further said "When we depart from the body, we shall be with Christ" (2 Cor. 5:8). For it is to our Lord that the Spirit of Christ which spiritual people receive reverts, while the animate spirit is buried away, in its own (natural) condition, and sense perception is taken away from it. In the case of the person who has preserved the Spirit of Christ in purity, when (this) Spirit goes to Christ, she says to him: "The body to which I went and which put me on from the water of baptism, has preserved me in purity". And the Holy Spirit will urge on Christ concerning the resurrection of that body which preserved her in a pure manner, asking him that the body be added to her again and that it might rise in glory.

But in the case of that person who receives the Spirit from the (baptismal) water, and (then) grieves¹⁰⁶ her, she will leave him before he dies and go back to her natural state, Christ; (there) she will make complaint to him about the person who has grieved her. And when the time of the appointed end has arrived, and the time for the resurrection is at hand, the Holy Spirit who has been preserved in holiness will take on great might from her nature and will go in front of Christ and stand at the entrance of the graves where people who have preserved

106 It is not clear what Aphr. understands by grieving the Spirit. In the sixth century Philoxenus in his *Memrā* On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit deals with this topic and he says that the Holy Spirit resides permanently in the baptized and the Spirit departs from him only in the case of apostasy.

her in purity lie buried, and she will await expectantly for the (last) cry, then, once the angels have opened the gates of heaven in front of the King, the horn will sound and the trumpets will blare (1 Cor. 15:52). And when the Spirit as she awaits the cry hears, she will open up the graves in haste, and raise up the bodies and that which lay buried in them; she will put on the glory which accompanies her. She herself will be within for the resurrection of the body, while the glory will be outside, for the adornment of the body. And the animate spirit will be swallowed up in the heavenly Spirit, and the whole person will become of the Spirit, while his body (exists) in her. And death will be swallowed up in life, and the body swallowed up in the Spirit. And as a result of the Spirit that person will fly off to meet the King (1 The. 4:17), who will receive him with joy. And Christ will thank the body for preserving his Spirit in pure fashion.

15. This Spirit which the prophets received is likewise the one we (received), my beloved. She is not all the time to be found with those who receive her, rather, at times she goes off to Him who sent her, and at times she comes back to the person who received her. Listen to what our Lord said "Do not despise a single one of these small ones who believe in me, for their angels in heaven continually behold the face of my Father" (Mt. 18:10). This same Spirit all the time goes and stands before God and beholds His face, and against the person who harms the temple in which she resides she will lay complaint before God.

16. I will convince you (on the basis of) what is written (in Scripture), that the Spirit is not to be found all the time with those who receive it. For it is written as follows: In the case of Saul, the Holy Spirit which he had

received when he was anointed (1 Sam. 10:1) passed from him, because he had grieved her; and God sent him a consuming spirit (1 Sam. 16:14) in its place. And whenever he was afflicted by an evil spirit David would strike upon the lyre, and the Holy Spirit that David had received when he was anointed (1 Sam. 16:3) would come along, and the evil spirit which was consuming Saul would flee away from her presence. Now the Holy Spirit which David had received was not to be found with him all the time, (but only) when he struck upon the lyre, then it would come. For had it been with him all the time, it would not have allowed him to commit sin with the wife of Uriah (2 Sam. 11). For when he was praying concerning his sins and acknowledging his faults before God, this is what he said, "Take not your holy spirit from me" (Ps. 51:13).

Concerning Elisha too, it is written, "Once he had struck upon his lyre, then the Spirit came to him and he prophesied saying, Thus says the Lord: You shall not see spirit/wind or rain and this wadi will be made into pits" (2 Kgs. 3: 15-17). Again when the Shilomite (Shunamite) woman came to him concerning her son who had died, he said this to her; "The Lord has concealed (it) from me and not informed me" (2 Kgs. 4:27).

But when the king of Israel sent (someone) with the intention of killing him, the Spirit informed him before the messenger had reached him, and he said "look, this son of iniquity has sent (someone) to remove my head" (2 Kgs. 6:32). He also made known (beforehand) concerning the glut of (food) that would occur in Samaria (2 Kgs. 7:1-2) the very next day. Again, the Spirit made it known to him when Gehazi stole the money and hide it (2 Kgs. 5:26).

17. For this reason, my beloved, when the Holy Spirit departs from a person who has received her, (all the while) she goes of and comes (back) to him, it is then

that Satan engages in battle with that person, aiming at making him act wickedly, so that the Holy Spirit will depart from him altogether. For as long as the Spirit is with someone Satan is afraid to approach him.

Look, my beloved, at how in the case of our Lord, who was born of the Spirit; he was not tested by Satan until he had received from on high the Spirit at baptism. Only then did the Spirit take him out in order that he might be tempted by Satan.

A person possesses the following means: the moment he perceives in himself that he is not (any longer) fervent in Spirit and his heart falls back into the concerns of this world, (at this point) he should realize that the Spirit is no longer with him; he should get up, pray and keep vigil so that the Spirit of God may come and he may not be defeated by the enemy.

A thief does not break into a house until he sees that its owner is departing. Likewise Satan too is unable to approach this house of our body until the Spirit of Christ is departing from it. You should recognize my beloved that the thief has no knowledge whether the owner of the house is at home or not unless he has previously listened and saw. If he hears the voice of the owner of the house (and realizes) that he is inside, then he says "The way lies open for me to leave". But once he has investigated and seen that the owner of the house has departed in order to see to his affairs, then the thief comes along, breaks into the house and steals (things). But if he hears the householder's voice giving instructions to the members of his household to keep vigilant and guard his house, telling them "I too am at home", then the thief takes fright and runs away so as not to be apprehended or caught.

Thus too with Satan: he does not have any prior knowledge (enabling him) to know and to see when the Spirit departs and he can come along to despoil a person. Rather, he too listens in and keeps watch: if he hears the person in whom Christ is dwelling uttering any ugly words, or losing his temper, or quarrelling or fighting, then Satan knows that Christ is not with that person and he comes along and fulfils his desire upon him. For Christ dwells with the gentle and the humble, residing in those who tremble at his word, just as (Scripture) says the prophet: "Upon whom shall I look and (in whom) shall I dwell, if not in the gentle and humble, (of Spirit) who tremble at my word" (Isa. 66:2). And our Lord said: In the case of the person who walks in my commandments and preserves my love, we will come and make an abode with him (Jn. 14:23).

Now if by listening he (discovers) that a person is vigilant, praying and meditating on the law of (Ps. 1:2) his Lord day and night, then he will turn back from that person, realizing that Christ is dwelling with him.

But if you should say, How great Satan is!, seeing that he is fighting with so many people (at the same time), listen, and be convinced by what I pointed out above to you concerning Christ; however much he is divided up among many, he is not diminished in any way. For a house through whose window a little sunlight comes in is entirely illumined by it; (so too) a person into whom a little of Satan enters becomes entirely dark. Listen to what the Apostle said: "If Satan takes on the resemblance of an angel of light, it is no great thing if his ministers can also take on the resemblance of the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Our Lord furthermore said to his disciples: "Look, I have given you the authority to trample down the power of the enemy" (Lk. 10:19).

The Scriptures have indicated that he has power and ministers as well. Job too said concerning him: "God made him so he could conduct his battle" (Job 40:14). These ministers he has, then, (and) he rushes them into the world to conduct the battle. But realize that he does not fight openly; since (God) has provided authority over him ever since the time of the coming of our Saviour, he seizes (people) furtively.

18. I should (like to) convince you, my beloved concerning the word(s) which the Apostle spoke whereby false teachings and teachings which serve as vessels for the Evil One are scandalized. For the Apostle said "There is an animate body and there is a spiritual body; it is written as follows, First Adam came into being with a living soul, but the second Adam (was) life- giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:44-45). They say there are two Adams; (the Apostle) said "Just as we have put on the image of that Adam who (came) from the earth, so we shall put on the image of that Adam who (came) from Heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49). For the Adam who is from the earth is the one who sinned, while the Adam from heaven is our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. Those therefore who receive the Spirit of Christ are in the likeness of the heavenly Adam who is our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, because what belongs to the soul is swallowed up by what belongs to the Spirit, as I described to you above.

And the person who grieves the Spirit of Christ, remains with the soul (only) at his resurrection, since the heavenly Spirit is not present with him so that the animate (spirit) might be swallowed up by the heavenly. Instead, once he has risen, he remains in his natural state, naked of the Spirit; since he has put the Spirit of Christ to shame, he is handed over to great shame; whereas the person who honours the Spirit and it is protected by him in

purity, on that day (of resurrection) the Holy Spirit will protect him, he becomes whole of the Spirit and he will not be found to be naked, as the Apostle said: "Once we are clothed, we will not be found naked" (2 Cor. 5:3). Again he said "We shall all sleep, but at the resurrection we shall not all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). He further said: "He who dies is going to put on him who does not die, and he who is subject to corruption (will put on) him who is incorruptible. And when the mortal puts on the immortal, and the corruptible the incorruptible, then the words written will be fulfilled: Death has been swallowed up by victory" (1 Cor. 15:53-54).

Again he says, "All of a sudden, like the blinking of an eye, the dead will rise uncorrupted (1 Cor. 15:52), and we shall be changed". Those who are changed are those who put on the image of that heavenly Adam, and they become spiritual beings; whereas those who are not changed remain with an animate (spirit) in the natural state of Adam as he was created out of the earth; and they remain in their natural state in the lowest part of the earth. Then the heavenly beings will be snatched up to heaven (1 The. 4:17), and the Spirit in whom they are clothed will cause them to fly up and they will inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for them from the beginning. But (those left just) animate will remain on earth owing to their being weighed down by their bodies; and they will return to Sheol (Ps. 9:18), where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12).

19. These things have I written to you, my beloved, reminding myself as well as you. Accordingly, have a love for virginity as the heavenly portion which involves communion with the Watchers of heaven. There is nothing comparable to it, and in those who (live) like this Christ dwells. The time of summer is approaching, the

fig tree has sprouted and its leaves have appeared (Mt. 24:32; Cant. 2:13). The signs which our Saviour gave have begun to come fulfilment, for he said "one people shall rise up against another, and one kingdom against another; and there shall be famines, plagues and terrible (signs) from heaven" (Lk. 21:10-11). You can see all these things coming to fulfilment in our own days.

20. Accordingly, read what I have written to you, both you and the brethren, members of the covenant who love virginity. Beware of the people who jeer. To the person who jeers at or mocks at his brother the words written in the Gospel apply, when our Lord wanted to get an opinion from the greedy and from the Pharisees, for it is written that, because they loved money they were jeering at him (Lk. 16:14). So now too, they are jeering at everything they do not agree with. Read, learn and be diligent in both reading and action. Let the Law of God be your meditation all the time (Ps. 119:97). And when you have read this letter, by your life, my beloved, stand in prayer and make mention of my sinful self in your prayer.

The end of the Demonstration on *Bnāy Qyāmā*

VII

THE DEMONSTRATION ON PENITENTS

The Demonstration begins by saying that among all who are born, Christ is the victorious one because he overcame the world in his contest (section 1). Christ is the wise doctor and the leaders of the covenant are the wise doctors who give repentance as a medicine to all who are wounded in the battle with Satan (sections 2-3). Those who suffered wounds in the battle from their enemy, Satan, should acknowledge their faults and show their wounds to the doctors for healing. Doctors should not hold back healing from the person who needs to be healed. The person who is ashamed to show his illness to the doctors should be counselled so that he does not hide it. The doctors should open the gates to the penitents and should not consider him as an enemy. If the wounded are unwilling to reveal their abscesses, they spread to the whole body and they get killed, then the doctors incur no blame. Once the wounded person has disclosed his wounds to the doctor, the doctors should not make them known. The man whose wounds healed should be careful not to get hit a second time in the place which has been healed (sections 4-6, 11). Section 7 mentions that the sons of the covenant who have put on the armour of Christ should learn the intricacies of war, so that they do not lose in the contest with the Satan. He presents the models of those people from the Old Testament who were ashamed to confess their sins and those

who confessed their sins in sections 8-10 and 16. In sections 12-15 and 23 he exhorts those covenanters who are defeated in their battle to acknowledge their sins and leave them, and apply the medicine of repentance to regain their lost state. He presents a long list of models from the Bible who had fallen but then regained the favour of God through repentance. He says to the covenanters that they should not be lacking in diligence just because of the fact that he had written that God will not reject the penitents; it is better to be in no need of penitence (section 17). Those who are invited to the contest should empty themselves, then only are they suitable for the fight. Aphrahat introduces the call of Gideon to a holy war as narrated in Judges 7:4-8. According to him the mystery which Gideon has foreshown is a type of baptism (sections 18-22). Section 24 asks the covenanters to share the misfortunes of their brethren. The covenanters who have fallen in their fight against the adversary and are unwilling to draw near to penitence as a result of shame in order to regain their lost covenantal life are designated by the weeds, the bad fish, the guest without the wedding garment and the foolish virgins. They will have a second death. Section 26 is an exhortation to the shepherds who are in charge of the Lord's flock. The good shepherd guides the flock well, strengthens the sick, supports the ill, bandages the broken, heals the lame and keeps the fatlings for the Lord of the flock. In the concluding section he remarks that repentance is possible only in this world. When this world will come to an end grace will disappear and justice will take its rule.

I. Out of all who are born, who have put on the body, there is only one who is victorious, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, as he himself testifies of himself, for he says "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), and the prophet too testifies about him, "He has done no wrong and no deceit has been found in his mouth" (Mal. 2:6; Isa. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22). And the blessed Apostle said, "He

who did not know sin (Christ), he (God) made to be sin (subject to death) for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). And how did he make him 'a sin (offering)' except in that he 'removed' sin, while he himself did not perform it, and "he fastened it on his cross" (Col. 2:14). Again the Apostle said "There are many who run in the stadium, but only one receives the crown" (1 Cor. 9:24).

Again there is no one else from the children of Adam who takes part in the contest¹⁰⁷ without being wounded or struck, because 'sin has reigned' (Rom. 5:21) ever since Adam trespassed against the commandment (Rom. 5:14); it has been struck by many, and it has (in turn) wounded many and slain many, but no one, out of (these) many slew it until our Saviour came and 'removed it' and 'fastened it to his cross'. But even though it is fastened on the cross, its 'sting' (1 Cor. 15:55) still exists, and pricks many people, until the end comes, when its sting will be broken.

2. All illnesses have their medicines and (can) be healed once the wise doctor has discovered them. Likewise, those who are wounded in our contest have as a medicine repentance, which they lay on their abscesses, and they are healed. O doctors, disciples of our wise doctor, take up this medicine, with which you shall heal the wounds of the sick. For the warriors who are smitten in battle at the hands of their adversary find a wise doctor who devises a remedy for them so that he may heal the wounded. And when the doctor has healed the person who has been wounded in battle, he receives gifts and honour from the king. Thus, my beloved, he who labours in our contest, and his adversary comes against him and wounds him, should be given as a

107 Refer also to paragraph three of this Dem.

medicine penance, provided the compunction of the wounded person is great. For God does not reject the penitent; Ezekiel the prophet said, "I do not desire the death of a dead sinner, but that he should repent from his wicked way and live" (Ezek. 18:23, 32, 33:11).¹⁰⁸

3. A man who is wounded in the battle is not ashamed to put himself unto the hands of a wise doctor, because the battle has worsted him and he is wounded; likewise, once he has been healed, the king does not reject him, but numbers and lists him in his army. In like manner a man who has been wounded by Satan should not be ashamed to acknowledge his fault and leave it, seeking out penitence as a medicine. For whoever is ashamed to show his abscess (finds it) turned into gangrene and disease (lit. harm) extends over his whole body; but he who is not ashamed has his abscesses healed and he returns to take part in the contest, while the man with gangrene cannot be healed again, and he will not put on (any more) the armour he has taken off. In like manner, a man who has been worsted in our contest has a means of being healed, provided he says "I have sinned" (Lk. 15:18) and he seeks a penance; while the person who is ashamed cannot be healed, because he is unwilling to acknowledge his wounds to the doctor, who has

108 Two centuries later Philoxenus of Mabbug in his *Memrā* On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit quotes this verse from Ezekiel and says this refers after the coming of our Saviour to Jews, pagans and to those who once believed, but then denied their faith. According to him these words of the prophet are also applicable to those who sin without perceiving their sin, since a sinner who has received baptism, even though he is dead towards his soul, yet he is alive to God because of the grace of baptism.

received two denarii (Lk. 10:35), out of which he heals all those who have been wounded.¹⁰⁹

4. Nor should you, doctors, who are disciples of our Glorious Doctor, hold back healing from the person who needs to be healed; to the person who shows you his abscess, provide him with the medicine of repentance, while to the person who is ashamed to show his illness, you should counsel, so that he does not hide it from you. And once he has disclosed it to you, do not make it known, lest, because of it even the victors are thought to be worsted by those who hostile and by the enemies; for the (battle) array whose dead lie prostrate is considered a humiliation for them all by their enemies; and so when there are wounded to be found among them, those who are not wounded heal their sores, without revealing anything about them to their enemies. Whereas if they informed everyone about them the whole camp would get a bad name, and the king in charge of the army would be angry with those who laid bare his camp, and he would smite them with blows worse than the ones they had received in the battle.

5. But if those who have been wounded are unwilling to reveal their abscesses, the doctors incur no blame for not healing the sick who have been wounded, and if the wounded wish to hide their sores, they will no longer be able to put on their armour, because of the gangrene they have acquired in their bodies; and (if) they

109 This is a reference to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). But Aphr. deviates from the Gospel account of the parable. Here the doctor (priest) stands in the place of the inn keeper who received the two denarii, and it is the responsibility of the wounded soldier to approach the doctor and reveal his wounds. According to him the two denarii which the doctor has received are not for a single wounded person but for all the wounded who approach the doctor for healing.

have gangrene and attempt to put on armour, when they go down to join the contest, their armour rubs against them, and their abscesses go putrid and foul and they get killed. And when those from whom they had hidden their abscesses find their corpses, then they laugh at their uncovering, because they had hidden the sores from their wounds, and they do not even bury their corpses, considering them to be foolish, wrongheaded and rash.

6. Again, the man who shows his abscess and is healed should be careful not to be hit a second time in the place which has been healed, because even the wise doctor finds it difficult to heal a person wounded (in the same place) a second time, since not every wound on an (old) scar can be healed, and even if it is healed, armour cannot be worn and even supposing he attempts to put on armour, the man takes on the probability of being defeated.

7. You who have put on the armour (weapons) of Christ, learn the intricacies of war, so that you do not lose and become wounded in the contest. Our enemy is cunning and skilful, but his weapons are less good than ours; we should therefore deal with him and remove his weapons, that is drowsiness, by means of wakefulness. For he is invisible to us when he fights with us. Let us turn towards him who can see him, to rid ourselves of him.

8. I further exhort you who have been wounded not to be ashamed to say "we have been worsted in the contest" Take the medicine that costs nothing, and repent and recover before you get killed. And you, doctors, I remind of what is written in the writings of our wise doctor, that he does not withhold penitence. For when Adam sinned, he invited him to repentance, saying

"where are you Adam" (Gen. 3:9), but he hid his sin from 'Him who searches out the heart' (Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23; 1 Chr. 28:9); and laid the blame on Eve who led him astray. And because he did not confess his error, (God) decreed the sentence of death for him and all his children. Likewise in the case of Cain, who was full of deceit and whose offering he did not accept, (God) gave him (the chance of) repentance, but he did not take it; for he said: "If you behave well, I would have accepted your offering, but if you do not, your sin will adhere to you" (Gen. 4:7). And he slew his brother in the deceit of his heart, and he was cursed, and became moving to and fro and wandering over the earth (Gen. 4:12, 14). God also offered one hundred and twenty years of repentance to the generation living at the time of Noah (Gen. 6:3), but they did not want to repent and so at the end of hundred years he wiped them out (Gen. 7:6, 11).

9. See, my beloved, how great advantage there is when someone confesses and leaves his wrongdoing. And our God does not reject the penitent; the men of Nineveh were weighed down with their sins, but they received Jonah's preaching when he preached ruin against them, and they repented and God had mercy on them (Jon. 3). Likewise the Israelites multiplied their wrongdoings and (God) invited them to penitence, but they refused; for he invited them through Jeremiah, saying: "Repent, penitent children, and I will heal (you in) your penitence" (Jer. 3:22); again he preached in the hearing of Jerusalem and said to her: "turn to me, as a repentant daughter" (Jer. 3:1, 7) and again he said to the Israelites: "Repent and turn from your wicked paths, and from the evils of your deeds" (Jer. 25:5).

And he spoke thus to the people: "If you turn to me, I shall cause you to return and stand before me" (Jer.

15:19). Again he spoke as follows, reproaching them: "I said, return to me, o woman who lives in Israel, with all your heart; but you did not return" (Ezek. 18:30). He also took up a parable against them, reminding them of what was written in the Law, and was even willing to treat the Law as untrue because of their repentance, for he said: "When a man takes a wife and she leaves him for another man, if that other man who took her dies, or if he leaves her and she returns to her former husband, it is not allowed for her first husband to take her again after she has become unclean; and if he does take her, the land itself is rendered unclean. so too now I have taken you, O Jerusalem, in marriage and you belonged me, but you left me and went off to play the harlot with stones and wood. Return to me, and I will receive you, and at your repentance I will treat the Law as untrue" (Jer. 3:1; Deut. 24.1- 4).

10. O Penitents, do not be afraid, then, of the absence of any hope, as written in the Scripture, for it is fitting for the Spirit of God to give warning thus; for he gave a terrible warning in Ezekiel the prophet, when he said to him: "If a man does what is just and right all his lifetime, yet at the end of it he does wrong, he shall die in that wrong, but if a man does wrong all his life, but (finally) repents and does what is right and just he shall save his life/soul" (Ezek. 33:13-14, 18-19, 18:21, 24). With these words he warned the just man not to sin and lose his course (Gal. 2:2, 5:7; 2 Tim. 2:5), while he gave hope to the wicked, that he might turn from his wickedness and live. He also said to Ezekiel: Even though I will cut off hope from the wicked, do you still warn him; even though I will give comfort to the righteous man, do you still put fear before him, so that he may be careful. When I tell the

sinner "you shall indeed die", and you have not warned him, the sinner will die in his wickedness, but I will require his blood at your hands, because you failed to warn him. But if you warn the sinner, that sinner whom you warned shall live, and you will save your own self. But if you tell the just man "you will certainly live"; and he trusts your word, it is your duty to warn him not to be proud and sin. (Thus) the person whom you warn shall live and you will save yourself (Ezek. 3:17-21, 33:7-9).

Listen further, penitents, to him whose hand is stretched out to you and invites you to penitence, for he speaks through the prophet Jeremiah and offers penitence, saying as follows: "If I speak against the people and against the kingdom, so as to uproot, overturn, destroy and demolish, and that people repents of its wickedness, I will avert the disaster which I have decreed against it; and if I speak of the people or of the kingdom in terms of rebuilding and planting, and relying on this it does what is wrong before me, I will turn aside from it the good which I promised it, and I will destroy it in its wrongdoing and sins" (Jer. 18:7-10).

11. You too who hold the keys of the gates of heaven, listen, and open the gates to the penitents, and be obedient to what the blessed Apostle said: "If one of you is burdened with some wrong you who are in the spirit should support him with a meek spirit and be careful lest you too are tempted" (Gal. 6:1), for the Apostle is afraid and warns them, saying about himself: "lest I myself, who have preached to others be rejected" (1 Cor. 9:27). You should not hold the man among you who is burdened with some wrong as an enemy, but you should counsel and advise him like a brother, because, once you have separated him from your company, he will be stuck by Satan (2 The. 3:15). The (Apostle) also said: "Those of

us who are firm (in faith) are under an obligation to bear the sickness(es) of the sick" (Rom. 15:1). And again he says "The lame should not be pushed aside but healed" (Heb. 12:13).

12. I address you too, the penitents; you should not keep back from yourselves this means of healing that has been given you. For it says in the scripture: "He who confesses his sins and abandons them, on him God has mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Look at the son who squandered his wealth¹¹⁰, and when he returned to his father, he received him in joy, and slew the fatted ox¹¹¹ for him, and his father rejoiced at his repentance, and even invited his friends to rejoice with him; and his father embraced him and kept on kissing him, saying "This my son was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found" (Lk. 15:32). And his father did not reprove him for the wealth he had squandered (Lk.15:11-32).

13. Our Lord himself encouraged penitents when he said "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Mk. 2:17; Mt. 9:13; Lk. 5:32; 1 Tim. 1:15); and again "There will be greater joy in heaven at the one sinner who repents, than at the ninety-nine just, who did not need to repent" (Lk. 15:7). The shepherd is more concerned with the sheep which got lost from the complete flock, than with those which did not go astray (Lk. 15:4-6; Mt. 18:12-14). For Christ died for sinners (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 5:6-8), not for the just, as he says in the prophet: "He bore the sins of many" (Isa. 53:12). And the Apostle said: "If God was reconciled with us

110 The word for wealth (*neksaw(hy)* in Aphr. agrees with D against the (*qenyāneh*) of SC P.

111 The word used for fatted ox (*tawrā d-petmā*) in Aphr. agrees with P against the (*'eglā d-petmā* of SC.)

while we are sinners by means of his Son's death, how much more now shall we live, in reconciliation with him, by means of his life" (Rom. 5:10).

14. God forgives the man who confesses his wrong. David, when he had sinned, went to Nathan the prophet and he told him what wrong he had done and what punishment he would receive, whereupon David confessed and said "I have sinned". The prophet said to him "The Lord also has removed your wrong because you confessed" (2 Sam. 12:13). And when he prayed he said as follows: "Against you alone have I sinned and done wicked things before you" (Ps. 51:4). And he again begged to God, saying "Do not bring your servant into judgement, for no living being is innocent before you" (Ps. 143:2). Even Solomon said this "Who shall say you are innocent, my heart, and 'I am pure of sins?'" (Prov. 20:9). It is also written in the Law that Moses prayed before God and said "You forgive wickedness and sin, but you by no means hold (anyone) innocent" (Ex. 34:7; Num. 14:18; Nahum 1:3). Again when God wanted to wipe out his people because of their sins, Moses spoke as follows, begging and supplicating "forgive your people their wrong, as you forgave them from (the time) in Egypt up to the present". And God said to him "I forgive them in accordance with your word" (Num. 14:19).

15. You who seek penance should imitate Aaron the high priest, who when he had made the people sin over the calf, confessed his sin, and his Lord forgave him (Ex. 32:21-25). David too, the chief of the kings of Israel confessed his wrong and was forgiven (2 Sam. 12:13). And also Simon, head of the disciples, having denied (saying) "I have not seen the Messiah", solemnly swearing that "I do not know him" (Mk. 14:71), when he offered him his

remorse, multiplying the tears of his weeping (Mk. 14:72), our Lord accepted him and made him the foundation, calling him Kephas, the edifice of the Church (Mt. 16:18; Jn. 1:42).

16. Do not be foolish like Adam who was ashamed to confess his wrong (Gen. 3:8-12); and do not imitate Cain who, being reprehended for killing his brother, said "I do not know where Abel is, for I was not his guardian" (Gen. 4:9). Do not stand with a haughty mind, like the 'corrupt generation' (Gen. 6:5) and you shall not multiply evil upon evil and increase your sins, while justifying yourselves when you are guilty. Listen to our forefathers, who held themselves in abasement, even though they were righteous. For Abraham said "I am dust and ashes," (Gen. 18:27) and he made himself humble. David too said "man's days are like vapour" (Ps. 144:4) and Solomon said in warning "If the just man is scarcely saved, where shall there be found a sinner or a wicked man (who shall be saved)?" (Prov. 11:31).

17. I beseech you, my beloved, by the mercy of God, do not be lax in your steadfastness and yourself become in need of penitence because I have written to you (saying) that 'God does not reject the penitent'. Penitence is only given to those who need it. You should take care not be in need of penitence. This hand is held out to the sinners, and the righteous do not require it: Alms are given to the poor, while the rich have no need of them. A man who has been stripped by bandits is given clothing to put on and cover his nakedness, of which he is ashamed. Do not loose what you have, so that you do not have to toil to seek it out again, uncertain, whether you have found it or not. Even though you should find it, it will not be what is before, for a man who does wrong and repents is not the same as the man from whom wrong

doing is far removed. You should love the higher lot, and keep yourself removed from anything inferior. Show your strenuousness well with your armour, so that you are not wounded in the battle, and do not need to seek medicine and tire yourself out going to the doctor. Even though you are healed, those scars will show. Do not rely on the fact that there is healing, and so give yourself a bad reputation. Rather, be above (the need) for repentance. A person with torn clothes needs to have them mended, and even though they are sewn up well, everyone will notice it. A man who has his fence broken, rebuilds it only with trouble, and even though he does rebuild it, it is still called a 'breach'. When thieves break in to someone's house, it is broken into on (from) inside and the hole is obvious, and the victim regains what he has lost only with great trouble. The man who cuts back his fruit tree has to wait a long time till it renews itself and bears fruit. The man who has opened up his source of water for irrigation, toils and labours till he has shut it again, and even though he has closed it, he is still afraid lest the water pile up and break it open again. The man who harvests his vine(yard) while it is in blossom, will lose the food (provided) by the grapes.

The man who is caught stealing is shamefaced, and he toils and labours till he is forgiven. The man whose work in the vineyard (Mt. 20) is sluggish, takes his pay and inclines his head, unable to ask for more. But he who restrains the strength of his youth shall rejoice before the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:9) and he who drinks not stolen water, shall have rest beside the fountain of life (Ps. 36:9; Prov. 10:11; 13:14; 14:27).

18. O you who have been invited to the contest, listen to the sound of the trumpet and take courage. I address you too, who hold the trumpets, priests, scribes

and wise man (Deut. 20:2-9), cry out and say to the whole people:¹¹²

He who is afraid, let him turn back from the contest (Jud. 7:3),
lest he breaks the heart of his brothers, as his (own) heart
(Deut. 20:8).

And he who has planted a vineyard,
let him return to work it,
lest he thinks about it in the battle and be weak in the
fight.(Deut. 20:6).

And he who is betrothed to a woman and wishes to marry
her,
let him return and take pleasure with his wife (Deut. 20:7).

And he who has built a house,
let him return to it,
lest he thinks of his house and not fight with his full
attention (Deut. 20:5).

The struggle is suitable for solitaries, for their countenance is steadfastly fixed towards what is before them, and they do not remember anything behind them (Phil. 3:13), since their treasures are set in front of them, and whatever they take as spoil, is entirely for themselves (their soul), and they take the maximum benefit.

I address you who blow on the trumpets, when you have finished giving your warning, observe those who turn back, and inspect those who remain, and take down to the water of testing those who have vowed themselves to war: the water tests everyone who is valiant, and the slothful are sorted out (from) there.

112 We find in Deut. 20 ideas similar to it.

19. Listen, my beloved, to this mystery whose form Gideon foreshowed when he gathered the people for battle, the scribes gave (them) the warning of the words of the Law, and of the phrases I have copied down for you above. Then many people turned back from the army, and when those chosen for battle were left behind, the Lord said to Gideon: "Take them down to the water and test them there. He who laps up water (in his hands) with his tongue is eager and courageous for going to battle, and while he who falls on his belly to drink water is too weak and feeble to go to the battle" (Jud. 7:4-8). My beloved, this mystery is a great one, which Gideon has foreshown: (it is) the type of baptism and the mystery of the contest and an example of the solitaires. For he forewarned the people first of all with the test of the water, and even when he gave them the test of the water, out of the ten thousand only three hundred men were chosen to make the war. This conforms with our Lord's word, when he said "Many are the called, but few are the chosen" (Mt. 22:14).

20. For this reason it befits the blowers on the trumpets, (namely) the preachers of the Church, to call out and warn all the covenant of God before baptism, (that is) those who have vowed themselves to virginity and (marital) continence, the young men and virgins and continent, and let the preachers warn them and say:

He whose heart is set on the state of marriage,
let him get married before baptism,
lest he fall in the contest and get killed.

And he who is afraid of this lot of fighting
let him return,
lest he break the heart of his brethren, like his own heart.

And he who loves belongings,
 let him return from the army,
 lest when the battle becomes intense for him,
 he remembers his belongings and returns to them;
 and he who turns back from the fight will have
 opprobrium.

While he who has not vowed himself, and has not put on
 the armour,
 if he turns back he is not blamed.

But everyone who has vowed himself and put on his
 armour,
 if he turns back from the contest,
 he becomes a laughing stock.

The man who has emptied himself (Phil. 2:7) is suitable
 for fighting,
 because he does not remember what is behind him, and
 return back to it.

21. And once they have proclaimed and
 announced and given warning to the whole covenant of
 God, they shall bring to the waters of baptism those who
 have been chosen for the contest and they shall be tested.
 And after baptism they shall look for those who are valiant
 and those who are slack: it is right to encourage the
 valiant, while they should turn back the weak and slack
 from the contest openly, lest, when the time comes they
 conceal their weapons and flee and get defeated. For he
 said to Gideon "Take down to the water those who have
 vowed themselves" (Jud. 7:4). And when the people went
 down to the water, the Lord said to Gideon: "All those
 who lap water in the way dogs lap with their tongues,

these shall go with you to war. And all those who fall down to drink water shall not go with you to war" (Jud. 7:5). This mystery is a great one, my beloved, whose sign (God) showed beforehand to Gideon, for he said to him "Everyone who laps water like a dog should go to war" (Jud. 7:5).

And of all the which were created along with man, there is none that loves his master as much as the dog, or keeps watch by day and night, and even should his master hit it, it does not leave him; and when his master goes out hunting, and a mighty lion comes upon, it will give itself up to death for his masters sake. It is the same with the valiant who are distinguished by means of the water; they follow their Master like dogs, and give up their lives for him, and they wage his battle eagerly, keeping watch day and night, bark like dogs as they meditate on the Law day and night (Ps. 1:2), and they show affection towards our Lord, licking his wounds as they receive his body, holding it before their eyes, licking him (it) with their tongues as a dog licks his master.¹¹³

Those who do not meditate on the Law are called "dumb dogs, unable to bark" (Isa. 56:10), and all those who are not zealous in fasting are called "greedy dogs whose appetite knows no satiation" (Isa. 56:11). While those who are zealous in imploring mercy receive the bread of the children, and (people) throw it to them (Mt. 15:26).

22. The Lord also said to Gideon: "Those who fall down to drink water should not go with you to battle" (Jud. 7:5), lest they fall and get defeated in war. For those who drank water in a sluggish way foreshowed the

113 The licking of Christ's wounds is an allusion to the Eucharist. Besides here this occurs in Dems IX:10 and in XX:8.

example of the lapsed. For this reason, my beloved, in this way it is fitting for those who go down to the contest not to resemble those sluggish ones, lest they turn back from the fight and become a source of shame for all their companions

23. Listen then, my beloved, to this saying. Do not, just because I have shown you from Scripture that God does not reject the penitents, do not rely on this and commit sin yourself; nor because I have told you this, should the person who is wounded grow faint and not seek penance. For this man should spend all his time in mourning and not be proud, and so receive condemnation. A servant who does something wrong before his master, changes his clothes so that his master may be reconciled to him; and he is attentive both early in the morning and late at night, in the hope of forgiveness; and when his master sees that he is assiduous towards himself, he forgives him his mistakes and is reconciled to him. For if he says to his master "I have done you a wrong", his master has mercy on him, but if he does some wrong and then says to his master "I have not sinned", he makes his master all the angrier with him.

Remember, my beloved, the son who squandered his goods (Lk. 15:11-32), and when he confessed to his father, he forgave him his faults; and the sinner who had many faults, when she approached our Lord, he forgave her many sins and had mercy on her (Lk. 7:36-50). Zacchaeus the tax collector was also a sinner (Lk 19:1-10), and he confessed his sins and our Lord forgave him.¹¹⁴ And our Saviour himself spoke as follows: "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Lk

114 Aphr. emphasizes here that the confession of the sins is a necessary condition for obtaining forgiveness from God.

5:32). For our Lord died for sinners (Rom. 5:6), and his coming was not in vain. The Apostle too said of himself: "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and a reviler, and yet God had mercy on me" (1 Tim. 1:13). Again he said as follows: "Christ died for us" (1 Thes. 5:10; Rom. 5:8).

For its master looked for and found the sheep which went astray from the whole flock, and rejoiced at its finding (Lk. 15:4-6). There is joy for the angels in heaven when a sinner repents of his wrong (Lk. 15:7-10), for the Father who is in heaven does not want a single one of these small ones who have sinned and seek repentance to perish (Mt. 18:14). Our Lord did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance (Mt. 9:13). Any one among us who is ill, let us relieve him of his suffering, and when anyone stumbles, let us suffer pain for him.

24. When any of our members falls sick (1 Cor. 12:26) we should labour at his ulcer until he is healed. And when one of our members is praiseworthy, the whole body is sound and resplendent, but when one of our limbs gets sick, fever weighs down the entire body. "Every one who causes one of these small ones to stumble, shall fall into the sea with a millstone round his neck" (Mt. 18:6).

And he who rejoices at his brother's misfortune, shall quickly meet his own destruction. He who stamps with his foot against his brother, shall not be pardoned; there is no healing for the mocker who strikes someone, and the reviler does not have his sins forgiven. He who digs a pit, falls into it, and he who rolls a stone (at some one), it shall turn back against himself (Prov. 26:27; Ps. 7:15). He who slips and falls should not say "may everyone do likewise" and the rich man who gets impoverished should not say "may all rich people suffer

the same fate". For if his request were heard, who would be able to supply his own need?

25. All this I have written to you, my beloved, because in our generation there are some who vow themselves to become solitaries, *bnay qyā mā* and chaste, and it is we who carry on the contest against our adversary. And our adversary fights against us to turn us back to the nature which we, of our free will, separated ourselves from. Some of us are beaten, and get wounded, and though they are defeated they hold themselves not so; and even though we may recognize their faults, they are people who stay in this mind and are unwilling to draw near to penitence; and as a result of their (false) shame they die a second death,¹¹⁵ and do not remember him who 'feels out consciences' (Rom. 8:7; Rev. 2:23; 1 Chr. 28:9).

There is again the man who acknowledges his fault, and is not granted penance. O steward of Christ, allow your fellow mortal penitence, and remember that your Lord did not reject the penitent. There are tares sown in the field, and the Lord of the seed does not allow his servants to weed out the tares from the corn until the harvest time (Mt. 13:24-31). And the net is spread in the sea, and the fish are not sorted out until it comes up (Mt. 13:47-50). Again the servants have received from their master money, but the unenterprising servant is judged

115 The phrase 'second death' has its roots in the targumic tradition.

Aphr. uses it to denote the condemnation to Gehenna at the final judgement, as opposed to physical death; cf. Dems VII:25 and VIII:19. It serves as a counterbalance to second birth through baptism. Even though it appears in Revelation 2:11, 20:14 and 21:8 the book of Revelation is not the medium by which it reached Aphr. because Revelation was not known to the Syriac Church until the fifth or sixth century. The term second death occurs also in Ephrem; Nis. XLIII:15, LXXIII:8, Abr. Kid. XIII:17 and 19.

by his master (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 12:28). Wheat and straw are mixed together, and the master of the threshing floor separates them and cleanses (the wheat) (Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17). Many are those invited to the feast, but the master drives out in to darkness the man with no (wedding) clothes (Mt. 22:1-14). The wise and foolish (virgins) stand together (side by side), but the Lord of the bridal chamber knows which he will allow to enter (Mt. 25:1-13).

26. O shepherds, disciples of our Lord, shepherd the flock and guide it well; strengthen the sick, support the ill, bandage the broken (limbs), heal the lame, and keep the fatlings for the Lord of the flock (Ezek. 34:3-5). You shall not be similar to the sluggish and foolish shepherd, who in his stupidity was unable to shepherd the sheep, and his arm withered, and his eye became blind, in that he said: "It will certainly die and perish, and those that survive may eat the flesh of their mates" (Zech. 11:9, 15-17). And when the chief Shepherd¹¹⁶ arrives, he will condemn the sluggish and stupid shepherd for not providing well for his companions. Whereas he who shepherds and guides the sheep well, is called a 'good and diligent servant' (Mt. 25:21), who has brought to the shepherd the flock in its entirety.

O watchmen, watch well and warn the whole people about the sword, lest it come and take (their) life; for (a soul's) life is taken by its sins, and its blood is required at your hands. If a (soul's) life is taken after admonition, it is taken in its own sins, and you are not to blame (Ezek. 3:17-21; 33:7-9). O fatling sheep, do not butt the weak ones, lest you be found guilty at the judgement when our great Shepherd comes.

116 The title chief Shepherd or great Shepherd is reserved for Christ alone by Aphr. Its origin is from the tradition.

27. Take this advice, my beloved, which brings close the penitents and warns the just. This world is (full of) grace, and until it comes to an end repentance is possible. The time is at hand when grace will disappear and justice will take its rule: there will be no repentance then; now justice (sits) silent, because the power of grace prevails. But when justice's time comes, grace will not be willing to receive the penitent, because death is laid down as a barrier for her, and after that there is no repentance. My beloved, read and learn, know and see that everyone needs repentance to some extent, for many run in the stadium, and the victor receives the crown (1 Cor. 9:24; 2 Tim. 2:5), and every one receives his reward in accordance with his labour.

The end of the Demonstration on Penitents

VIII

THE DEMONSTRATION ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

He demonstrates here about the resurrection of the dead; in the day of resurrection our body will rise in fullness. We all have to stand before the judgement seat of Christ and each person will be rewarded for what he had done previously (section 4). On the day of resurrection the righteous will be changed and the earthly form will be swallowed up in the heavenly, and be called a heavenly body (section 5). In the beginning God made Adam from nothingness but in the day of resurrection God raises his children not from nothingness (section 6). The Patriarchs of the Old Testament like Jacob, Joseph and the great prophet Moses were looking for the resurrection of the dead (sections 7-10). God showed his power to give life, not through the words but through the deeds of the prophets like Elijah, Elisha and Ezekiel (sections 11-13). By the single word of God which is sent through Christ, all the dead shall be resurrected swiftly. Our Lord himself gave life to three dead persons and he instructed the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead (sections 14-16). A sinner is dead to God, while he is alive, and a righteous man when he is dead is alive to God (sections 17-18). Death is only a sleep, both for the righteous and the unrighteous until the day of resurrection. On that day the Judge will give the kingdom to the righteous but the

unrighteous will be sentenced to outer darkness, which is a second death for them (sections 19-21). Until now the eschatological judgement has not taken place, and the former ones who laboured in the faith will not be perfected till the last ones come (section 22). The Spirit which the righteous received remembers the body in which it dwelt before God all the time after death, but for the unrighteous there is nobody to remember them before the Lord because the Holy Spirit is far away from them (section 23). He concludes the Demonstration by saying that nobody should have any doubt about the resurrection of the dead. On that day all will receive their reward from the Lord according to their deeds.

1. For, disputes always exist about this, "How will the dead rise and with what body will they come?" (1 Cor. 15:35). For the body wears out and is destroyed; as the time lengthens the bones also are reduced to powder and are unrecognizable. When you enter into a tomb, where a hundred dead are buried in it, you will not (even) find there a handful of dust. Those who think on these things say thus, "We know that the dead will rise, but they will cloth themselves in a heavenly body and in spiritual forms. If it was not so, in the case of these hundred dead who were buried in a single tomb, and after much time has come to pass there is nothing at all there, when the dead will be restored to life and they put on a body and rise, if they do not cloth themselves in a heavenly body, from where does that body come, seeing that there is nothing in the tomb?".

2. But he who thinks this, is foolish and ignorant. When the dead were brought into (the tomb) they were something, and when they had been (there) for a long time, they became nothing at all. When it was time for the dead to rise, that nothing became something according to its former nature and a change was added to its nature. Oh, stubborn man who thinks thus, listen

to what the blessed Apostle said, when he was convincing a stupid person like you, saying, "Stupid man, the seed which you sow will not live unless it dies. And that which you sow was not like that which is born in the stem, but a single, bare grain of wheat or of barley or of other grains. For, each one of the seeds was given its own body. But God will clothe your seed with its body as he wills" (1 Cor. 15:36-38).

3. Therefore, fool, be convinced by this, that each one of the seeds clothes itself (in a) body. You never sow wheat and reap barley. You never plant a vine and it puts forth a fig-tree. But everything issues forth according to its nature. So also the body, which has fallen into the earth, the same will rise up. About the fact that the body is corrupted and wears away you ought to be convinced by the parable of the seed: as the seed when it falls in the earth consumes away and is corrupted, then from its own decay it issues forth, buds and gives fruits. For, land which is ploughed, into which no seed has fallen, gives no fruits, even if that land drinks up all the rain. (So also with) the tomb where the dead are not buried, people will not proceed forth from it at the resurrection of the dead, even if the full sound of the trumpet resounds in it. But if, as they say, the spirits of the just will ascend into heaven and they put on themselves the heavenly body, (then) they are in heaven, and he who raises the dead (also) dwells in heaven. But when our Life-giver comes, whom then will he raise up from the earth? But why did he write to us "The time will come, and even now is, that the dead too shall hear the voice of the Son of man; they shall live and shall come out from their tombs?" (Jn. 5:25, 28-29). For a heavenly body is not going to come and enter into the tomb and go out anew from it.

4. For the stubborn say thus, "Why did the Apostle say that the body that is in heaven is one thing and that on earth is another?" (1 Cor. 15:40). But whoever hears this let him also hear the other thing which the Apostle said, "There is an animate body and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44). Again he said, "We all will sleep, but we all will not be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). He said again, "This one which will die will put on that which will not die. And this one which is corruptible will put on that which is not corruptible" (1 Cor. 15:53). Again he said, "We all must stand before the judgement seat of Christ, so that everyone in his body will be rewarded for that which he had previously done, whether it was good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). He said again, "What will those who are baptized for the dead do? For, if the dead will not rise, why are they are baptized for them?" (1 Cor. 15:29). He said again, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ did not rise. If Christ did not rise your faith and our preaching is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). If it is so, "We are found to be false witnesses, for we testified concerning of God that he raised up Christ-when he did not raise (him)" (1 Cor. 15:15). Well then, if the dead do not rise up, there is also no judgement. And if there is no judgement, "Then let us eat and drink, for we will die tomorrow. Do not be led astray. Evil discourses corrupt good minds" (1 Cor. 15:32-33). But when the Apostle said, "The body which is in heaven is one thing and (that) on earth is another" (1 Cor. 15:40), this word should be understood by you thus: When the body of the just rises and is changed, it is called heavenly, but that which is not changed is called earthly by its nature.

5. But hear, my beloved, the word which is like this, which the Apostle has further spoken. For he said, "The man of the spirit judges all things, but he himself is

judged by no man" (1 Cor. 2:15). He said again, "Those who are of the spirit, think of what belongs to the spirit and those who are of the flesh think of what belongs to the flesh" (Rom. 8:5). He said again, "When we were of the flesh, the pains of sins were working in our members, so that we might become fruits for death" (Rom. 7:5). Again he said, "If the spirit of Christ is in you, you are of the spirit" (Rom. 8:9). All these things the Apostle said, while clothed in the flesh, and was doing the works of the spirit. So also there will be a change to the righteous at the resurrection of the dead and the earthly form will be swallowed up in the heavenly, and he will be called a heavenly body, (but the body) which is not changed, is called earthly.

6. But, my beloved, about this resurrection of the dead, I will instruct you as much as I can. For in the beginning God created Adam; he formed him from the dust and he raised him up. For, if when Adam was non-existent, he made him from nothing, how much more now easier for him to raise him up; behold, he is sown in the earth. For if God would do those things which are easy for us, his works would not be considered by us as mighty. For look, there exist among people craftsmen who make amazing things, and those who were not craftsmen of these works, stand and wonder at how they came into being, and the work of their comrades seems difficult in their eyes. How much more should it not be right to wonder at the works of God. But for God, this was no great matter that the dead should live. When the seed was not sown in the earth, the earth gave birth to something which was not fallen in it: without being pregnant it brought forth in its virginity. So how is it hard that the earth should again bring forth something which had fallen in it, thus conceiving and giving birth

to it? Behold, her travails are near, as Isaiah said, "Who has seen like this and who heard such things, for the earth is in travail on a single day and a people is born in a single hour?" (Isa. 66:8). For, Adam was not sown, but he sprang up; he was not conceived but he was born. For behold, his children are now sown and wait for the rain, and they will spring up. Behold, the earth conceives many and the time of her bringing forth is near.

7. For, all our fathers were looking for and hastening towards the hope of the resurrection and the life of the dead, as the blessed Apostle said, "If the righteous had been waiting for that city from which Abraham went out, there was time for them to return and enter into it again; but they showed that they were waiting for a better one than it, one which is in heaven" (Heb. 11:15-16). They were expecting to be released and enter into it quickly. From that which I am writing to you understand and see that they were waiting for the resurrection. For Jacob, our father, when he was dying he bound Joseph his son with an oath and said to him, "Bury me in the tomb of my fathers, beside Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca" (Gen. 49:29, 31). But why, my beloved, did Jacob not wish to be buried in Egypt, but with his fathers? He showed this beforehand, that he was expecting the resurrection of the dead, so that when the (last) cry occurs and the sound of the trumpet takes place, his resurrection will be close to that of his fathers, and at the time of the resurrection he will not be mingled with the wicked who will return to Sheol and to torment.

8. So also Joseph bound his brothers with an oath and said to them, "When God shall remember you, take up my bones with you from this place" (Gen. 50:25). His brothers did according to the word of Joseph and kept the oath 125 years. At that time in which the armies of

the Lord went out from the land of Egypt, then Moses took the bones of Joseph and went out (Ex. 13:19). The bones of the righteous man were more precious and better to him than the gold and silver which the children of Israel took from Egypt when they plundered them. The bones of Joseph remained 40 years in the desert. At the time when Moses fell asleep, he gave them as inheritance to Joshua, the son of Nun. For the bones of Joseph, his ancestor, were better to him than all the spoils of that land which he seized. But why did Moses give the bones of Joseph to Joshua? Because he was from the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph. He buried them in the land of promise, so that there might be a treasure in that land, where the bones of Joseph were buried (Jos. 24:32). Also at that time when Jacob was dying he blessed his tribes and showed to them what would happen to them at the end of the days, and he said to Reuben, "Reuben, you are my first-born, my strength and the beginning of my power. You went astray; as water you will not remain because you went up to the bed of your father. Truly you went up and you have defiled my bed" (Gen. 49:3-4). From the time that Jacob fell asleep until Moses fell asleep there were 133 years. Then Moses wished to make absolution by his priesthood concerning Reuben for his wrongdoing and sin, because he had slept with Bilha, the concubine of his father, so that, when his brothers should rise up, he would not be deprived of their number. Thus he said in the beginning of his blessing, "Let Reuben live and not die; and let him be in the number" (Deut. 33:6).

9. And also when the time came that Moses should sleep with his fathers, he was sad and was sorrowful. He beseeched and sought favour from his Lord that he might pass on to the land of promise. But why, my beloved, was Moses, a righteous man, grieved

that he did not enter into the land of promise? If not, so that he might be buried with his fathers and not be buried in the land of his enemies, in the land of Moab. For Moabites hired Balaam, the son of Beor to curse Israel. Because of this Moses wished thus not to be buried in that land, lest the Moabites would come and take vengeance on him, uncovering the bones of the righteous man and casting them out. The Lord performed a favour for Moses; he brought him up to the mountain of Nebo and, while causing it to pass before him, he showed him all the land (Deut. 34:1-4). When Moses looked at the whole land and gazed upon the mountain of Jebusites, the place where the Shechinah was to dwell in the future, it grieved him and he wept as he saw the tomb at Hebron, the place where his fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried, since he would not be buried with them, his bones would not be added with their bones, he would not rise up together with them at the resurrection. When he saw the whole land, his Lord comforted him and said to him, "I myself will bury you and hide you so that no man will know your tomb". "And Moses died according to the word of the mouth of the Lord and he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite of Beth-Peor, the place where the Israel had sinned and no man knows his tomb up to today" (Deut. 34:5-6). But two good things did his Lord do to Moses in that he did not make known his tomb to the sons of Israel. Firstly, so that his enemies might not know and cast his bones out from his tomb. Secondly, so that the sons of his people would not know and make his tomb a house of worship, because he was regarded as God in the eyes of the sons of his people (Ex. 7:1). And understand, my beloved, from this, that when he left them and ascended to the mountain, they said that we do not know what has happened to this Moses who

brought us up from the land of Egypt (Ex. 32:1). And they made for themselves a calf and worshipped it, they did not remember the God who brought them up from Egypt through Moses with a powerful hand and with an uplifted arm (Deut. 5:15; Ps. 106:19-21). Because of this God respected Moses and he did not make known his tomb, lest, had he made known his tomb, the sons of his people might have gone astray and they made for themselves an image and worshipped, and sacrificed to it. And they would have disturbed the bones of the righteous man by their sins.

10. Again Moses clearly proclaimed the resurrection of the dead; for he said, as from the mouth of his God that "I cause to die and I make alive" (Deut. 32:39). Again Hannah also said thus in her prayer, "The Lord causes to die and gives life, and he brings down to Sheol and brings up" (1 Sam. 2:6). The prophet Isaiah also said thus, "Lord, your dead shall live and their corpses shall rise; those who lie in the dust shall be awakened and praise you" (Isa. 26:19). David also proclaimed and said, "Behold you do wonders for the dead and the mighty ones shall rise and acknowledge you. They that are in the tombs shall narrate your kindness" (Ps. 88:10-11). And how will they narrate in the tombs the goodness of God? -if not when they hear the sound of the trumpet which summons and the horn that calls from high (1 Thess. 4:16; Mt. 24:31) and the earthquakes that will happen, the tombs which will be opened, and the mighty ones shall rise in glory, and they will narrate to each other in the tombs saying, "Great is the gracious act which has been done in us. Our hope had been cut off and hope rose for us. We were imprisoned in the darkness, but we have come into the light. We were sown in corruption but we have risen in

glory. We were buried according to the way of the soul but we have risen according to the way of the spirit. Again we were sown in weakness, but we have arisen in power" (1 Cor. 15:43-44). This is the gracious act, which they will narrate in the tombs.

11. My beloved, it was not only in words that God said, "I give life to the dead", but also he showed us through deeds, through many testimonies, lest we have some hesitation in our mind. He showed us beforehand clearly, for through Elijah a wonder was seen, that the dead shall live and those who lie in the dust shall rise. For, when the son of the widow died, Elijah gave him life and gave him to his mother (1 Kgs. 17:17-24). Again Elisha, his disciple, gave life to the son of the Shunamite (2 Kgs. 4:8-37) so that the witness of both would be confirmed and ratified for us. Also again, when the sons of Israel cast a dead man over the bones of Elisha, that dead man revived and stood up (2 Kgs. 13:21). The witness of three is true.

12. Also through the prophet Ezekiel, again the resurrection of the dead was clearly manifested, when God brought him forth to the valley and showed him many bones; he caused him to pass by them, round about them and said to him, "O man, will these bones live?". Ezekiel said to him, "Lord of Lords, you know". And the Lord said to him, "O man, prophesy concerning these bones and say to them the word of the Lord of Lords". When he caused them to hear these words, there was a quake and a noise, and the bones were gathered together, even those which were reduced to powder and broken. When the prophet saw them, he was amazed, (for) they came from all regions and (each) bone received its comrade, and one joint came near to its companion and they were composed one with another. Their dryness became moist, joints were

joined with the nerves, blood bubbled up in the blood vessels. Skin spread over the flesh and the hair sprouted up according to its nature. They were lying and there was no breath in them. Then again he commanded the prophet and said to him, "Prophecy concerning the spirit and speak to her; come, O spirit, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, and let them live. When he had caused them to hear the latter word, the spirit entered into them and they came to life and stood upon their feet, a force which is very great" (Ezek. 37:1-10).

13. But why, my beloved, did these dead not rise by a single word through Ezekiel and the resurrection of bones and spirit would have been completed? Behold, the bones were arranged by a single word and the spirit came by another. If not, so that the perfection should wait for our Lord Jesus Christ, who by a single voice and a single word would raise, at the end, the whole body of Adam. For it was not the word that was inferior, but its producer was weak. And about this understand and see that also when Elijah and his disciple Elisha gave life to the dead, it was not by a single word they raised them up. But, until they had prayed and made supplication, and delayed no little time, (only) then did they arise.

14. And our Lord also in his first coming gave life to three dead, so that the testimony of the three should prove true. He raised each one of them with double words. For, when he gave life to the son of the widow, he called him twice saying to him, "Young man, young man, arise" (Lk. 7:14). And he revived and stood up. Again he called twice to the daughter of the chief of the Synagogue, saying to her "Young girl, young girl, rise up" (Mk. 5:41). And her spirit returned and she rose. When Lazarus died he went into the burial-place,

he prayed and called in a high voice saying, "Lazarus, come out" (Jn. 11:43).¹¹⁷ And he revived and came out from his tomb.

15. All these, I have instructed to you how these dead people rose after two words, because two resurrections occur in them: that first resurrection and the second one that is to come. Because in that resurrection in which all people will arise, none falls again. By the single word of God which is sent through His Christ, all the dead will arise swiftly as the twinkling of an eye. Because he who brings it forth was not weak or small. For by a single word which he pronounces, he causes all ends (of the earth) to hear, all those who lie prostrate will jump and rise up. The word will not return empty to the sender; but as it is written by prophet Isaiah, who compares the word with rain and snow; for he said, "As the rain and the snow which descend from heaven, do not return there, but they make the earth grow and bring forth, and they provide seed to the sower and bread for food, so shall be the word that will go out from my mouth and it shall not return to me empty, but only when it has done that which I desire and accomplished that for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:10-11). For the rain and the snow do not return to heaven because they perform the will of their sender in the earth. But the word which He (God) sends through Christ, who is His Word and Utterance will return to Him with great power. Because when he comes and brings it (the word), it will descend like rain and snow and all that is sown will spring up through him and bear righteous fruits through him. The word will return to its sender, but his going will not be empty. But he says before

117 Here Jesus, according to the known Syriac versions of the Gospel and Aphr., calls the name Lazarus only once and not twice as he said previously.

the sender as follows, "Behold I and the sons whom the Lord has given me" (Isa. 8:18; Jn.17:12). This is the voice by which the dead shall live, our Saviour witnesses about it when he said, "The time is coming that the dead shall also hear the voice of the Son of man" (Jn.5:25). They will go out from their tombs as it is written, "In the beginning there was the voice, that is the Word" (Jn. 1:1). Again he said, "That word became a body and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). This is the voice of God, which shouts from on high and raises up all the dead.

16. Again our Lord instructed the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead when they brought to him the parable of the woman who belonged to seven men, and said to him, "Behold, the woman belonged to all of them: in the resurrection of the dead to which of them shall she belong?" (Mt. 22:28). Then our Lord said to them, "You err greatly; you do not understand the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mt. 22:29). For in the case of those who are worthy of that world and that resurrection from among the dead, men do not take wives, nor are women belonging to men, because they cannot die, for they are like angels of God and children of resurrection. But about the resurrection, that the dead shall rise, have you not read in the scripture that God said to Moses from the bush, 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob?' And behold he was not the God of the dead, for they all live for him (Lk. 20:35-38; Mt. 22:31-32).

17. There are also those who are dead to God, even when they are alive. But he placed a commandment to Adam and said to him, "In the day that you eat from the tree, you shall certainly die" (Gen. 2:17). And after he had transgressed the commandment and had eaten, he lived 930 years (Gen. 5:5). But he was considered dead to God by his sins, so that you may be sure that a sinner

is called dead even when he is alive. I will explain to you. For thus it is written in the prophet Ezekiel, "As I live, says the Lord of Lords, I have no pleasure in the death of the dead sinner" (Ezk. 18:23, 32; 33:11).

18. Our Lord also said to that man who said to him that, "Let me go to bury my father and I will come to you" (Lk. 9:59). Our Lord told him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:60). But how do you understand this saying, O my beloved? Have you ever seen the dead bury their dead? Or how does a dead man rise to bury the dead? But accept this explanation from me. A sinner, when he is alive, is dead to God; but a righteous man when he is dead, is alive to God. For this death is a sleep, as David said, "I laid down and slept, and I awoke" (Ps. 3:5). Again Isaiah had said, "Those who lie in the dust shall awake" (Isa. 26:19). Our Lord said about the daughter of the chief of the Synagogue, "the young girl is not dead, but is indeed sleeping" (Mt. 9:24). He said to his disciples about Lazarus, "Lazarus, our friend has fallen asleep, but I go that I may awaken him" (Jn. 11:11). And the Apostle said, "We all will sleep but we will not all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). He said again "about those who sleep, it should not grieve you" (1 The. 4:13).

19. But it is right for us to fear the second death which is full of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 22:13), and of groanings and miseries, which dwells in outer darkness. But blessed are the faithful and the righteous in that resurrection where they expect that they will awaken and receive their good promises. As for the wicked who do not believe in the resurrection, woe to them from that which is kept for them! It would be better for them if they would not have arisen, according to what they believe. For the servant, for whom his lord prepares stripes and chains, when he is sleeping he wishes not to be awakened, knowing that when

the morning comes he will awake and his lord will scourge him and bind him. But the good servant, to whom his lord has promised gifts, he waits for when it will be morning and he will receive gifts from his lord. Even when he sleeps deep he sees in his dream as if his lord is giving him that which he has promised him; he rejoices in his dream, he exults and is cheerful. As for the wicked, his sleep is not pleasant for him. Behold, he thinks the morning has arrived and his heart is broken by his dream. As for the righteous, they slumber and their sleep is pleasant for them by day and by night. They are not aware of that whole long night and it is considered in their eyes as a single moment. Then in the morning watch they awake and rejoice. As for the wicked, their sleep is heavy on them and they are like the man who is laid out with a heavy and deep fever. He turns about in his bed hither and thither. Whole night terrifies him, being protracted for him. He is fearful of the morning when his lord will condemn him.

20. But our faith shows thus that when people fall asleep, they slumber this sleep, not knowing good from evil. And the righteous do not receive their promises nor the wicked the punishment until the Judge comes and separates between those on the right and those on the left (Mt. 25:32-46). You should be instructed from that which is written, that when the Judge sits, the books are opened before him (Dan. 7:10), and the good and evil are called; those who have done good receive good things from the Good, and those who have carried out evil receive evil things from the just Judge. For he does not change his nature towards the good and he is just because he justly condemns many. But he changes his nature towards the evil; grace has vanished in that world through justice and he himself becomes just to all. Grace does not associate with justice towards them; as grace does not help destruction, so also justice with grace. Grace is distant from the Judge, and justice spurs on the

Judge. He who is near to grace, let him turn towards it and it will not deliver him into the hands of justice, lest it condemns him, when it requires (account) for his faults at his hands. As for him who is far from grace, justice will bring him to the trial.¹¹⁸ He will be condemned by it and he will go to the torment.

21. Hear, my beloved, this explanation that the retribution will take place (only) at the end. For when the shepherd separates his flock and makes them stand at his right and at his left, when he acknowledges the goodness of the good; then he will make them inherit the kingdom. And when he rebukes the evil and they are condemned, then he sends them to torment (Mt. 25:32-46). And those who sent messengers after the king and said, This one shall not be king over us (Lk. 19:14-27), when he takes up the kingdom and returns, then his enemies shall be killed before him. And the workmen who are active and wearied by labour in the vineyard, will not receive the wage until the labour ceases (Mt. 20:1-16). And in the case of the merchants who received the money, (only) when the Lord of the money comes will he then seek the interest (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:15-26). And the virgins who waited for the Bridegroom slept and slumbered, for he delayed to come, when they shall hear the cry, then they shall wake up and prepare the lamps. And the wise virgins will enter in and the foolish ones shall be shut out (Mt. 25:1-13). Those who made rapid progress in faith will not be made perfect without us (Act. 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 11:40).

118 Aphr. expresses a tension between grace and justice. Even though at the last judgement justice prevails, grace helps those who are near to it. But in CDiat. a slightly different idea is found; in IX:17 we read "For when he manifests his grace, his justice perishes, the first shall be last" (Mt. 20:16).

22. From all these, understand, my beloved, and let it be sure to you that no man has yet received his reward. For the righteous have not inherited the kingdom nor have the evil gone to torture. Till now the shepherd has not separated out his flock (Mt. 25:31-46). Behold, the workmen toil in the vineyard and they have not yet received the wages (Mt. 20:1-16). Behold the merchants are transacting with the money and till now their Lord has not come to take the account. And the king has gone to receive the kingdom but until now he has not returned for the second time (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27). And those virgins who are waiting for the Bridegroom are sleeping until now; they are waiting for the cry, then they will wake up (Mt. 25:1-13). The former ones who laboured in the faith will not be perfected till the last ones will come.

23. But those who are childish in mind say, "If no man has received any wages, why did the Apostle say, When we shall depart from the body, we shall be with our Lord?" (2 Cor. 5:8). But remember, my beloved, that I have explained about this subject in the Demonstration on *iḥ idāye*,¹¹⁹ that the spirit which the righteous received goes to our Lord according to its heavenly nature until the time of resurrection, there it comes to be clothed in the body in which it dwelt. It remembers it before God at all time and is eager for the resurrection of the body in which it dwelt, as the prophet Isaiah said about the Church which is from the peoples, "Let those who remember you stand constantly before the Lord, and you will not grant them stillness" (Isa. 62:6-7). But for the unjust, there is nobody to remember them before the Lord because the Holy Spirit is far away

119 The sixth Dem. is referred here as the Dem. on *Iḥidayā*, but it is referred as the Dem. on *Bnā y Qyā mā* in the twenty-second Dem. Cfr. Dem. XXII:25.

from them, for they are according to the soul and are buried according to the way of the soul (1 Cor. 15:44).

24. Again the doctrines, the instruments of the evil one are offended by the word which our Lord spoke, "No man has ascended to heaven except him who came down from heaven, the son of man who was in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). They say, behold our Lord has witnessed that the earthly body did not ascend to heaven. The ignorant ones do not understand the sense of this. For when our Lord explained to Nicodemus, he did not understand the sense of the word; then our Lord said to him, "No man has ascended into heaven and descended" (Jn. 3:13), to tell you, what is there. "For if I have told to you about those things which are in the earth, and you do not believe (me), how will you (then) believe (me) if I speak to you about those things which are in heaven?" (Jn. 3:12). Behold no other witness has descended from there with me to bear witness about those things which are in heaven so that you may believe. For Elijah ascended there (2 Kgs. 2:11), but he did not descend to bear witness with me so that the testimony of the two might be certain.

25. But, my beloved, you should not have for yourself any doubt about the resurrection of the dead. For the living mouth testifies, "I make to die and I make alive" (Deut. 32:39). Both proceed from one mouth. As it is certain to us that he makes to die and we see (it), so also it is certain and trustworthy that he makes alive. From that which I have instructed you accept and believe that on the day of resurrection your body will rise in fullness. You shall receive from your Lord the reward of your faith. You will rejoice and will be glad in that which you have believed.

The end of the Demonstration on the
Resurrection of the Dead

IX

THE DEMONSTRATION ON HUMILITY

The fruits of humility are many. Humility brought the humble to exaltation and the proud to humiliation. Through it the righteous found favour before God (sections 1-3). The humble are distant from envy, jealousy and strife; they are the lovers of peace. They always find happiness in Christ their Lord and their heart conceives all that is beautiful; as a result their mouth gives birth to good fruits (sections 4-6). When Aphrahat was presenting his viewpoint that humility is the best medicine for all moral diseases and weaknesses he adduces the teaching of Jesus that, "No man can serve two masters" (Mt. 6:24). Here the two masters are pride and humility. Whoever embraces boasting and pride will be deprived of the world of magnificence, and whoever loves humility will be glorified and honoured there (section 8-9). The Son of the King dwells in a person, therefore his tongue should love silence, his lips should be careful of divisions and vanity should not proceed from his mouth (section 10). Just as did the patriarchs of Old Testament, so the humble bring forth delightful fruits and the folds of their heart are full of good treasures (sections 11-13). While requesting a love for humility from all who love God, he introduces the moral of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk. 18:1-8) in the concluding section in order to make a comparison between the nature and action of Jesus and Adam. The nature of Adam was

that of dust and God gave him a commandment so that, by observing it, he might attain the nature of God. Adam wanted to take on himself this glorification; as a result of his self-glorification, God made him return to the original dust, and furthermore a curse was added to his lowly state. In contrast to this, our glorious and exalted Lord humbled himself; but he was elevated to his original nature, and additional glory was given to him (Phil. 2:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:27).

1. Humility is always good, it delivers from all sufferings those who are near to it. Its fruits are many; humility brings forth many good things. From it is brought forth innocence. Noah found favour through it and it saved him, as it is written, God said to him, "I have seen you righteous and perfect in this generation" (Gen. 7:1). The testimonies to humility are many, for he said in the Scripture, "The humble inherit the land and dwell in it forever" (Mt. 5:5; Ps. 37:11, 29). Again, the prophet Isaiah said, "On whom shall I look and (in whom) shall I dwell? -if not in the gentle and in the humble person who trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2). Again he said, "Better is the person of humble spirit and of humble eyes than him who possesses a city" (Prov. 16:19-32). He again said thus, "The righteousness of the perfect goes before him" (Prov. 11:5). Thus it is written about Moses, the trustworthy man, "He was more humble than all the sons of man who are on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

2. For, humility is the testimony of the benefits of the fear of God. Many also are the gifts which those who love it obtain on account of humility. When you seek after compassion, it is to be found with the humble. Humility is the dwelling place of righteousness. Doctrine is to be found in the humble, and their lips pour forth knowledge. Humility brings forth wisdom and understanding. The humble possess moderation. If you

seek modesty and patience, it is found with the humble. Self-denial is desirable and fair for them. The word of the humble is sweet and his face is cheerful, he laughs and rejoices. Love is becoming to the humble, because they know how to conduct themselves in it. The humble abstain from all evil things and their faces exult in their good hearts. The humble speaks what is becoming to him; and his lips laugh, but his voice is not heard. The humble fears strife because this gives birth to jealousy. When the humble hears the words of fury, he stops his ears so that they do not enter into his heart. The mind of the humble gives birth to all sorts of good things; the senses of his understanding focus on the beautiful things. The humble drinks up the learning like water and it enters in him, in his veins, like oil. The humble person is humble, but his heart is exalted in the uppermost height. Where his treasure is, there his thought is directed. The eyes of his vision gaze on the earth, but the eyes of his understanding is raised in the uppermost height. The humble is always fearful lest he incurs a word of rebuke from another. The humble meditates on the Law of his Lord; he takes from it the medicine which he is seeking. The humble rejoices in the good of his comrade; he regards his friend like himself. The humble approaches a high and haughty person; he captures and takes away all his knowledge. Humility pulls down fortified fortresses and changes fury and enmity.

3. The humility of Jacob conquered the fury of Esau his brother and of the 400 men who were with him (Gen. 33:1-11).

The humility of Joseph conquered the fury of his brothers who were jealous of him and hated him (Gen. 45:1-14).

Moses conquered and humbled the whole pride of Pharaoh through his humility (Ex. 3:11).

The humility of David conquered the pride of Goliath (1 Sam. 17:40-51), who threatened him with anger.

The humility of Hezekiah conquered all the threat of Sennacherib who threatened and blasphemed (Isa. 36-37).

The humility of Mordecai conquered all the boastfulness of Haman (Est. 10:3).

Daniel and his brothers conquered through their humility the wicked men who slandered them (Dan.3).

4. The humble restrain themselves from envy, jealousy and strife. Pride is an abominable thing in their eyes. They do not associate with cruelty; they put falsehood far away from them. To slander (others) is alien to them. They cast out and remove enmity because they are sons of peace. They cast out and remove pride from their midst, because they are careful about their good name. They do not know contentiousness, because they love simplicity and righteousness. They are calm and quiet and await the Bridegroom. They are strangers from the whole world; contempt is far away from them. Mockers are hateful in their eyes. The inner rooms of their heart are full of good treasures. Their minds are clean from deceit. The eyes of their mind gaze in the high as they look upon the beauty of their Lord (Isa. 33:17) and rejoice in him in all time. Their heart conceives all sorts of virtues. Their lips bring forth good fruits. They have received good seed from their Lord. They remove and cast out from it the evil thorns. Their seed gives fruits a hundredfold (Lk. 8:8) because they watered it from the fountain of life. Humility is planted in them and brings forth fruits of faith and love. They are clothed in Christ as with a good garment (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27) and guard him from all uncleanness; the spirit whom they have received dwells in them. She is beloved to them and they

do not grieve her (Eph. 4:30). They decorate their temples for the Great King who enters and dwells in the gentle and humble. They place their building on the firm rock and they do not fear the winds and the waves (Mt. 7:24-25). Their works shine like lamps and their light illumines before them. They make ready the wedding gift for the Bridegroom who comes and they await to enter into his bridal chamber (Mt. 25:1-13). They take the money and transact with it wishing to gain ten talents (Mt. 25:20-21). They cast out and spend their wealth; they do not tie up the money or hide it (Mt. 6:19-21). Their visible body walks on earth, but all their thoughts are set towards their Lord. They journey and walk on the narrow and confined road, and they enter through the narrow door of the kingdom (Mt. 7:13-14). They compel their inclinations to keep the law on which they meditate at all time. They meditate and go round in the world like strangers, and look for that city of heaven (Heb. 11:9-10). Their mind is caught up and placed on high, and they hope to enter into the sanctuary there. Their eyes are open and they gaze there, and see the Bridegroom who is getting himself ready. Their ambassadors go there every day and they receive and bring from there peace and tranquillity. Their names are written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3; Ps. 69:29). They pray and groan so that they are not deleted from it. They bring their offerings as a bribe, (namely) fasting and prayer, to him who has power to write and delete. They write the Law of their Lord in their heart in order that they themselves may be written down in that book for eternity. They cancel out their sins all the time so that their names may not be deleted from the book of life. They prefer the sufferings of present so that they may be away from the torments of eternity. Their tongues teach the hymns of Christ so that they may take delight in the place of sweet and pleasant hymns. They stretch out to

get a glimpse of that place; they are in need so that what is needed may be upon them.

5. They are the lovers of humility whose peace with all people is great. The humble are the sons of the Exalted One and the brothers of Christ, who when he was announced came to us on account of peace. Mary received him because of her humility. For when Gabriel announced to the blessed Mary, he said to her as follows, "Peace to you, blessed among women" (Lk. 1:28). Gabriel carried the peace and brought the Blessed Fruit; the beloved child was sown in Mary. She praised and magnified the Lord who was pleased with the humility of his maid-servant; however he was not pleased with the proud and the exalted ones. The Exalted One lifted up all the humble (Lk. 1:48, 51-52). See, my beloved that the peace makes haste towards the humble.

6. When the teacher of humility also was born, the angels of heaven were singing praises and saying thus, "Peace in heaven; glory on earth and good hope for human beings" (Lk. 2:14). When he taught humility at his coming, he said thus, "To the one who strikes you on your cheek, offer him the other; and whoever compels you to go with him a mile, go two other (miles) with him. And to the one who wishes to take your coat, give to him your cloak also" (Lk. 6:29; Mt. 5:39-41). All these things which our Saviour taught the humble are able to perform them. Pomp and exalted state are neither becoming to the humble, nor is a diadem on the head of the poor. A humble person who exalts himself is hated by his Lord, and a poor person who places a diadem in his head is killed by the king. Splendour and pride are the diadem of our glorious king because of this to him alone is magnificence becoming, for it belongs to him and it is the sign of his royal dignity. Exalted state also is becoming

to his nature, but abominable and hateful to the sons of flesh. Marks and signs of royal dignity are suitable to the king, but not to the inferior. My beloved, on this account that which God hates with reference to us but which is beloved with him should not be found with us, but what is his own should remain with him and we should remain in our nature. Humility is suitable to us, magnificence and exaltation to him. He gave to us what is ours, humility. What he did not give us, we should not take. Even though he may give us (this), he is actually testifying us because whoever takes anything that is not belonging to him, is considered as corrupt and deceitful. The Exalted One sets on high the one who remains in his humble nature. Do not go after magnificence.

7. "For, a person cannot serve two masters" (Mt.6:24). Pride does not share with humility, nor does pomp with modesty. Boldness also does not share with moderation, nor does flurry with self-control. Hence one who accepts pride will be deprived of the coming world. Whoever loves humility will be exalted and elevated in the place of magnificence. As the rich man who used to wear purple and was exalted, magnifying himself and boasting, when he went there he fell into torment. And Lazarus, who humbled himself, was exalted and seated in the bosom of Abraham (Lk. 16:19-26). The Pharisee and the Publican were praying in the temple. The Pharisee glorified himself and held himself righteous, but he went down to his house unjustified. But the Publican who humbled himself went down to his house justified (Lk. 18:9-14). Evil is placed against good, darkness against light, enmity against righteousness, jealousy against humility, and strife against silence. There is no power in the Evil One to stand against the good. Darkness flees whenever it sees the light. Sweetness renders bitterness

insipid, humility conquers enmity, righteousness cancels jealousy, and silence quenches strife. For darkness is not jealous with blackness, nor enmity jealous with contentiousness, nor does jealousy mock at strife, nor does bitterness hate wormwood. Evil people, however, are envious against the good, the wicked contend jealously with the righteous, the proud glorify themselves against the humble, the deceitful ones mock at the trustworthy ones, the foolish ones treat the wise with contempt.

Whoever has no truth in himself, does not want the righteous to be found.

Whoever is clothed in pride, for him the humble is like his murderer.

Whoever has tangled his hands in wickedness, is not pleased with a righteous man.

The one, whose mouth is filled with falsehood, in his eyes truth is hateful and abominable.

8. There is no other medicine to jealousy, except silence and humility. Evil retribution goes up with jealousy.

Because the serpent envied Adam in the Paradise, it received punishment, three curses. He (God) took from it its feet and it went on its belly. He took its food and gave dust to it (Gen. 3:14). He placed it as enemy and gave it to man to be trampled.

Cain who killed Abel out of his jealousy received the curses for seven generations (Gen. 4:24) and he was stirring and shaking on the earth (Gen. 4:14).

Esau envied his brother Jacob and drove him away; but the humble Jacob received the right of the first-born and the blessings. The exalted one was subjected to the humble one.

In the case of those who envied humble Joseph, Joseph was exalted and his adversaries fell down and bowed themselves before him (Gen. 42:6).

In the case of Pharaoh who envied at the people of Hebrew and commanded that their children should perish in the sea, by that judgement that he judged he was judged and he received retribution for his sins (Ex. 14:19-30).

Korah and his companions who envied Moses: cruel retribution came upon them (Num. 16:1-33); Sheol opened its mouth and swallowed him, fire kindled and devoured him.

(When) Aaron and Miriam envied humble Moses, the Holy One revealed himself to destroy them and Miriam became a leper for seven days (Num. 12:1-15).

(When) Saul envied the humble David and hated him, the Holy Spirit passed from him and a troublesome spirit consumed him (1 Sam. 16:14-23).

(When) Ahab envied Naboth and killed him, in the place where the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, (there) the dogs also licked his blood (Ahab's) (1 Kgs. 21:1-19).

In the case of Jezebel who persecuted Elijah, she could not injure him at all, and the dogs devoured her, and Elijah ascended to heaven (1 Kgs. 19:1-3, 21:23; 2 Kgs. 2:11).

In the case of the slanderers who envied at righteous men, flames of fire consumed them and the just men escaped from it (Dan. 3:22-48).

The Chaldeans who had slandered Daniel, filled the pit by themselves which they had dug for him (Dan. 6:17-25).

Haman who envied Mordecai and his people had no success in his decree: he and his sons received death on the cross (Est. 9:25).

In the case of the foolish people did not receive the humble king Christ, he uprooted and scattered them from their place. And when he will take the kingdom and return, his enemies will be destroyed before him (Lk. 19:27).

In all these things which I have written and reminded you, my beloved, I have not spared myself, in order that the word should be confirmed to you, that the wicked will receive an evil punishment through the hands of the humble.

9. On this account, my beloved, therefore, let this word be assured to you, that everyone who puts on himself jealousy, in him the Evil One dwells; also in him dwells that unclean spirit which dwelt in Saul. When David played in the cithara for Saul that he might be relieved, yet Saul who was clothed with jealousy, threw the spear against his benefactor (1 Sam. 19:9-10). He in whom is found humility, in him dwells the quiet and humble one, and he himself becomes a dwelling place for Messiah. Remember again, what I have written to you above, that the good do not envy the wicked, but the wicked envy the good. I have never seen a rich person who envies the poor, nor the righteous (who envy) the wicked, neither do the just envy the unjust, nor the sons of peace the troublesome, nor the trustworthy the false. The honest do not envy the corrupt nor the modest (envy) the abusive. On this account, run after humility, which overcomes jealousy, removes strife, joining with it silence and patience together -so that you keep away from much dispute. Love humility, possess moderation, join

patience with both. Many love the humble but the wicked hate the proud who are like them. Hate anger, depart from hateful blemishes. Do not open your mouth for your anger, and do not let your face flush with colour, and do not exhibit your tongue and bring forth from it evil fruits. What the anger conceived should not be brought to birth in you, lest even more thoughts be conceived as a result of their offspring.

10. When anger is conceived in you, it will make an ulcer. Do not let your tongue give birth to it and do not allow it (to reach) your lips. Keep hidden all thoughts which ascend in your heart, in your inner chamber. The good things which your heart conceives, give to your tongue; your mouth should learn beautiful words. Let a word be revolved in your heart for many days and see, if it is worth, (then) give it to your tongue. If it is not fitting, it should die in your heart and bury it in your thought. Keep your tongue from false witness, lest you kindle fire in your whole body. The Son of the King who dwells in you should be honoured well and you should not introduce with him any evil (and) troublesome (companions), for he wishes to dwell alone in a person. He does not dwell with the one who has many cares. Your tongue should love silence because it licks the wounds of its Lord. Your lips should be careful of divisiveness because you kiss the Son of the King with them. Vanity should not proceed from your mouth, otherwise he may hold back from you and not dwell in you.

11. Love humility, the strong wall which is like iron; love modesty, the sweet fruits; whoever eats from them satisfies his soul, exults and rejoices. All the trees are discerned by their fruits. The thoughts of a man are perceived by his mouth. The wise perceives the thought

of every man who comes near from his tongue, because from the abundance of the heart, the lips speak (Lk. 6:45). The man who fears God always speaks all kinds of good things; he recites and speaks the Law of his Lord. Even when he hears scurrilous words, he does not offer them a hearing. He entirely speaks good words. Words of injury are not found in his mouth because his thought does not conceive anything which is hateful. Thus is a man discerned as a person who meditates on the Law of his Lord. These are the fruits of a good tree. The wise discerns the man who devises evil things by his lips. If he speaks any words that are scurrilous, mocking, sneering, blaspheming, whoever hears him knows him, because these things have actually been conceived and then brought forth; for conception brings everything to birth. Remember what our Saviour said, "The good tree gives good fruits and the bad tree gives bad fruits; neither a bad tree can give good fruits, nor a good tree gives bad fruits. For from its fruits that tree is known. Thus a good man from the good treasures which are in his heart produces (good) and speaks good things. A bad man from the evil treasures which are in his heart produces (evil) and speaks evil things. For it is from the fullness of the heart that the lips speak" (Mt. 7:17-20; Lk. 6:44-46).

12. For, if there are thousand fruits in a tree, you can taste the whole tree from the single (fruit). If you taste one from the many good sweet fruits, your soul will desire that you alone eat for yourself all the fruits of the tree. Likewise a wise man, when he approaches a wicked man, perceives (him) first from his words; if however he sees that his words are injurious, he will not want to hear them any more. If a wise man approaches a wise and educated man, he proceeds to sit near him and remains (near him) until he tastes his words. If he sees that they

are good and sweet, full of knowledge and understanding, from that time (onwards) he will want to hear and learn from all his words. The wise man distinguishes also the man who is called the humble from his words. There is he who is seen perfect, silent and humble, but his heart ponders on injurious things; that is to say, a foolish humble man among the wise humble men who ponders on good things, is like a bitter berry intermixed with the quince-tree, whose appearance is like quince-tree, but the taste is bitter to the palate.

13. My beloved, love humility which has a pleasant fragrance and a sweet taste. The humble one who even in his exaltation (remains) humble; is beloved by both the exalted and the humble. Even if affliction falls to him, he is not cast down, for he continues living according to (his) nature. But (for) the proud person one who has not humbled himself, when a great affliction falls to him, it is his ruin, for he did not humble himself in his high position. The friends of the humble are many; the friendly greetings to him have no limit. Many narrate his praises. His humility destroys his defects because he does not speak evil in his heart against anyone. The humble sits and meditates on wisdom. His mind reaches out to the heights of heaven. The word of the humble is listened to and heard, for, he forms it and utters it in a balanced way. The folds of his heart are full of good treasures. His tongue brings forth pleasant fruits. Humility is the source of peace. The rills of peace proceed from it.

Noah loved humility and it protected him from the waters of the flood (Gen. 6:8).

Abraham came near to it and he was an inheritor in the land of life. He fell down before God and humbled himself like dust and ash (Gen. 18:27).

Isaac grew up in humility and kings recognized him and loved his covenant.

Jacob was a perfect man and he dwelt in the tent (Gen. 25:27) and received the blessings of Esau from his father (Gen. 27:26-29).

Each one of our fore-fathers was humble, chaste and moderate. The Exalted One raised up the humble and he humbled the proud, and brought them down to shame.

Job delighted in humility and his Lord bore witness about his integrity (Job. 1-2). The unjust Satan envied in him, but Job put the enemy, the opponent of the just, to shame. His Lord raised up Job, who persevered in his integrity, as his mouth had bore witness (Job. 1:22, 2:10).

14. My beloved, love this portion, the nature in which the sons of flesh dwell. When someone humbles himself, this is justice. The earthly nature of Adam was from the earth (1 Cor. 15:47). His Lord set for him the commandment to keep, so that when he should keep that which was commanded, his Lord would bring him to an elevated nature. But because he wished to take for himself an elevated status, which was not from his nature, the Lord turned him to the former nature of humiliation. About this our Saviour has witnessed when he said, "For everyone who is exalted will be humbled and everyone who is humbled will be exalted" (Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11, 18:14). Adam elevated himself, but he was humbled; he returned to his original earthly nature. Our elevated and glorious Saviour humbled himself but he was elevated and raised to his former nature (Phil. 2:6-11, 1 Cor. 15:27); glory was given to him in addition and all were subjected to him. Our Saviour who humbled himself received glory and (so) received an addition (1 Cor. 15:27). Adam who exalted himself received a humiliation, and he

received curses in addition to humiliation. On this account, my beloved, thus it is becoming and right for the person who loves God to love humility and to remain in the nature of humility, whose roots fixed in the earth and its fruits come in before the Lord of majesty. Moderation, prudence, a kind disposition are the choice fruits to be found in humility. The humble are simple, patient, beloved, perfect, just, skilful for the good, astute, calm, wise, gentle, quiet, merciful, repentant, benevolent, profound, mild, elegant and desirable. Whoever desires this tree which has these fruits, blessed is his soul, for it rests in peace, and dwells in it, he (Christ) who is pleased with the calm and humble.

The end of the Demonstration on Humility

X

THE DEMONSTRATION ON PASTORS

This shortest demonstration of Aphrahat is an exhortation to the pastors of the Church. The pastors have to place before themselves the example of the Good Shepherd who gave himself for his sheep (sections 1, 6). They should learn how a shepherd cares for his sheep, watches and toils for his sheep. Thus the pastors of Old Testament first fed the sheep and then only they were chosen to feed the people (sections 2, 5). Even though the Chief Pastor handed over the sheep to Simon Kepa and to other brilliant pastors (section 4), he is still concerned for his sheep. He asks an account from the pastors and each one receives from him the reward according to their deed (section 3). He ends his exhortation to the pastors in the seventh section. In the eighth section he speaks about the wisdom of God, which never diminishes. This wisdom is shared by many, but it lacks nothing. He concludes the demonstration in the ninth section by saying to the inquirer that he has answered the questions which he had placed before him. He had also answered what his inquirer had not asked. Aphrahat also reminds the bn̄y qyā m̄ of their obligation of reading, learning and meditating on the things which he has written for them.

1. The pastors takes their place at the head of the flock and give the sheep the food of life. Whoever keeps vigil and takes trouble on behalf of his sheep is concerned

for his flock and he is the disciple of our Good Shepherd, who gave himself for his sheep (Jn. 10:13). But he who does not lead his flock well is like the hireling who has no concern for the sheep. O pastors, imitate those former upright pastors.

Jacob fed, guarded, toiled and kept watch over the sheep of Laban, and he received a reward. For Jacob said to Laban, "Behold I have been twenty years with you. I have not taken advantage of your sheep and your flock, I have not eaten the males of your flock; I have not brought any broken to you, so that you might make exaction for it from my hands. The parching heat devoured me in the day and the cold in the night; my sleep departed from my eyes" (Gen. 31:38-40). Look, you pastors, how this pastor was concerned for his flock. He was awake at night to guard (them) and he kept vigil; he laboured in the day to feed (them).

Jacob was a pastor, Joseph was a pastor, his brothers were pastors, Moses was a pastor, David was also a pastor, and Amos was a pastor. All these were pastors who fed the sheep and led (them) well.

2. But why, my beloved, did these pastors first shepherd the sheep and (only) then were chosen to feed the people?- if not so that, they should learn how a shepherd cares for his sheep, watches and toils on behalf of his sheep. Once they had learnt the practices of pastors, they were chosen for leadership.

Jacob shepherded the sheep of Laban, he toiled, watched and led (them) well (Gen. 31:38-41). Then he shepherded and led well his sons and taught them the manner of shepherding.

Joseph together with his brothers shepherded the sheep (Gen. 37:2) and he was a leader for a numerous

people in Egypt. He led them as does a good shepherd with his flock.

Moses fed the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro (Ex. 3:1). He was chosen from the flock to shepherd his people and he led them as a good shepherd. Moses took his staff on his shoulder and went at the head of the people whom he was leading and shepherding for forty years. He watched and toiled for his flock (as) a diligent and good shepherd. When his Lord wished to blot them out on account of their sins, because they worshipped the calf, Moses prayed and sought of his Lord, saying, "Either forgive the people their sins, or blot me out from your book, which you have written" (Ex. 32:32). This is the diligent pastor, who handed himself over on behalf of his sheep. This is the brilliant leader who gave himself for his people. This is the merciful father who hovered over his children and brought them up.

Moses, the great and wise pastor who knew how to lead the flock, taught Joshua, the son of Nun, a man of the spirit who led the flock, the whole camp of Israel. He destroyed kings, conquered the land and gave the land to them as a feeding-place; he distributed a cote and fold to his sheep.

Again David fed the sheep of his father (1 Sam. 16:11) and he was taken from the flock to lead his people; "He led them according to the integrity of his heart and according to the skilfulness of his hands" (Ps. 78:72). When David counted the flock of his sheep the (divine) anger came against them and they began to be brought to destruction. Then David handed himself over on behalf of his sheep, praying and saying, "Lord, God I have sinned, in that I have counted Israel. Let your hand be against me and against the house of my father. These

innocent sheep, what have they sinned?" (2 Sam. 24:17). So also all the diligent pastors gave themselves up on behalf of their sheep.

3. But those pastors who have not cared about the sheep, these are hired servants who fed themselves alone. On account of this, the prophet proclaimed to them, saying to them, "O you pastors, who destroy and disperse the sheep of my flock. Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, Behold, I care for my sheep as a shepherd cares for his flock on the day of violent rain with wind. I will demand my sheep from your hands. O you foolish pastors, you clothe yourselves with the wool of the sheep and you devour the flesh of the fatlings, yet you do not feed the sheep, you have not healed the one which was sick, you have not bound up the one which was broken, you have not strengthened the one which was weak, you have not gathered in the one which was lost and scattered. You have not kept the strong ones and the fatlings, but you subdued them with violence. You yourselves graze the good pasture and you trample with your feet what is left over. You drink the pleasant water and you muddy with your feet what is left over. My sheep have fed on that which is trampled, what your feet have trampled, and they have drank the water that your feet have muddied" (Ezek. 34:2-4, 9-12, 18-19).

These are the greedy and wretched pastors, the hired servants who did not feed the sheep or lead (them) well. They did not rescue them from the wolves. But when the Great Pastor comes, the chief of the pastors, he calls and inspects his sheep, and he commands his flock, he will bring those pastors and make an account with them, and condemn them according to their deeds. But the Chief Pastor will cause those who have fed the sheep well to rejoice, and he will make them inherit life and

rest. "O stupid and foolish pastor, on your right hand and for your right eye I have left my sheep, because you have said about the sheep, that which dies, let it die, that which perishes, let it perish, whatever is left, let it eat the flesh of the others. Behold on account of this I will put out your right eye and I will wither up your right arm. Your eye which looked on the bribe shall become blind. Your hand which has not led in justice shall be destroyed" (Zech. 11:9, 17). "As for you, my sheep; you, the people, are the sheep of my pasture, and I am the Lord your God" (Ezek. 34:31). "Behold, henceforward, I will feed you on a good and fertile pasture" (Ezek. 34:14).

4. "The Good Shepherd gives himself for the sake of his sheep" (Jn. 10:11). Again he said, "I have other sheep and it is proper for me to bring them also hither. The whole (flock of) sheep shall become one, with one shepherd; on account of this my Father loves me, because I give myself over for the sake of the sheep" (Jn. 10:16-17). He said again, "I am the door of the sheep. Every one enters through me shall live, and he will come in, and go out, and will find pasture" (Jn. 10:9). O you pastors, you should be like this diligent pastor, the head of the whole flock, who cares so much for his flock: He brought near the distant, brought back the strayed, visited the sick, strengthened the weak, bound up the broken and kept the fatlings (Ezek. 34:2-4). He handed over himself for the sake of the sheep. He chose and taught the brilliant pastors and delivered the sheep into their hands and gave them power over all his flock. Indeed he said to Simon Kepa, "Feed my sheep, my lambs and my ewes for me" (Jn. 21:15-17). Simon fed his sheep; when his time was fulfilled, he handed over the flock to you and he went away. You also should feed (them) and lead (them) well. For a pastor who takes care of his sheep has

no other occupation together with it: he neither sets up a vineyard, nor plants gardens; nor does he fall also into the difficulties of this world. We have never seen a pastor who left his sheep in the field and became a merchant, nor who became a farmer and caused his flock to wander. If he leaves his flock and does these things (then) he has handed over his flock to wolves.

5. Remember, my beloved, what I have written to you about our fore-fathers who learned first the customs of the sheep and they received from it the testing of diligence. And (only then) were they chosen for leadership so that they should learn and observe how a shepherd cares for his flock. As they led the sheep carefully, so also they would be perfected in this leadership.

For, Joseph was chosen from the sheep so that he might lead the Egyptians in a time of distress (Gen. 37:2).

Moses was chosen from the sheep so that he might lead his people and feed them (Ex. 3:1).

David was taken from following the sheep so that he might become the king over Israel (1 Sam. 16:11).

The Lord carried away Amos from following the sheep and he made him prophet over his people (Amos 1:1, 7:14).

Elisha also was taken from following the yoke so that he might become a prophet in Israel (1 Kgs. 19:19).

Moses neither returned to his sheep nor did he leave his flock which had been delivered to him.

David did not return to the sheep of his father, but he led his people in the innocence of his heart (Ps. 78:72).

Amos did not return to feed the sheep or to collect wood, but he took the office of the prophet and fulfilled it.

Elisha did not return to his yoke but served Elijah and filled his place.

But in the case of a deputy pastor, who loves farmsteads, merchandise, vineyards, olive trees and cultivation, he does not wish to become a disciple, and (so) he (Christ) did not deliver into his hands the flock.

6. I beseech you, pastors, that you should not be over the flock as foolish and stupid pastors, nor be greedy and lovers of possessions. Every one who feeds the sheep may eat of its milk (1 Cor. 9:7). Every one who guides the yoke may make use of his labour. It is right for the priests to take a share from the altar and that the Levites should receive their tithes. Whoever eats from the milk, let his heart be upon the flock. He who makes use of the labour of his yoke, let him be diligent in his cultivation. The priests who share from the altar, should serve the altar with honour. And the Levites who receive the tithes, should have no share in Israel. Oh pastors, the disciples of our Chief Pastor, you should not be like hired servants, for the hired servant does not care for the sheep (Jn. 10:13). You should be like our Kind Pastor whose life was not more beloved to him than his sheep. Bring up the young, exalt the virgins, love the lambs, let them grow up in your bosoms, so that when you go to the Chief Priest, you may offer to him all your sheep in full and he may give to what he promised: "Where I am you also shall be" (Jn. 12:26). But these few matters are sufficient for good pastors and leaders.

7. However, I have written above to remind you, my beloved, of the manners of life that are suitable to the whole flock. In this *memr̃* I have written to you about the pastors, the leaders of the flock. These memoirs I have written to you, my beloved, as you asked me in your beloved letter.

8. The steward has brought me into the treasury of the King and shown me the many blessed things there. When I saw them, my mind was captivated by the great treasure. When I looked at it, it dazzled the eyes and captivated the thoughts, and distracted the mind with many colours. Whoever takes from it will grow rich and make rich. It is open and permitted before all who seek it. When many take from it, it does not decrease in anything at all. When they give from that which they have taken, their own is greatly multiplied. Those who receive freely, let them give freely as they have received (Mt. 10:8). For, it is not bought for a price because there is nothing which is comparable to it. For, the treasure does not diminish, nor do those who take it ever get sated. They drink, but they thirst (for more), they eat but they hunger (for more). Whoever is not thirsty, cannot drink. Whoever is not hungry, cannot eat. The hunger for it satisfies many. And from the thirst of it proceed (many) springs. For the man who comes near to the fear of God is like the man who is thirsty and approaches the spring, drinks and is satisfied. The spring is not diminished at all. The land which is in need of water to drink, drinks from the spring and its water is not dried up. When the land drinks, it again has need to drink, but the spring is not diminished from its flow. The knowledge of God is likewise; when all people receive from it, no loss occurs in it, nor is it brought to an end by sons of flesh. He who takes from it cannot take (all of it), but when he gives (of it) he lacks nothing.¹²⁰ When you take fire with a lamp from a flame, and you light many lamps by it, the fire does not diminish when you take from it; nor does the lamp wane when it lights many. One single

120 The ideas expressed in CDiat. I:18-19 reflect Aphrahat's this long exhortation; on the one hand, they could simply be explained away as representing common exegetical topoi, on the other hand, they could be a fairly clear borrowing.

man cannot take the whole treasure of the king, nor does the water fail when a thirsty person drinks from the spring. Nor when someone stands on a high mountain (can) his eye perceive (both) the near and the distant. Nor when he stands and counts the stars of heaven, can he limit the powers of heaven. When someone comes near to the fear of God, he cannot bear the whole of it. Even if he takes a great deal, it is not perceived that it is diminished (at all). When someone gives from that which he has taken, it is not finished up for him or arrived at its end.

Remember, my beloved, what I have written to you in the first *memr̥* about Faith, that whoever has freely received, it is proper for him to give freely as he has received (Mt. 10:8), as our Lord said, “You have received freely so give freely” (Mt. 10:8). For whoever withholds from that which he has taken (Mt. 25:29), even that which he has received will be taken away from him. On this account, my beloved, in as much as I was able to take at this time from that treasure which does not fail, I have sent to you from it. Although I have sent (it) to you, the whole of it remains with me. For, the treasure does not diminish, for it is the wisdom of God. The steward is our Lord Jesus Christ as he witnessed and said, “Everything is handed over to me by my Father” (Mt. 11:27). When he is the steward of wisdom, he is the wisdom, as again the Apostle said, “Christ is the power of God and his wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:24). This wisdom is divided up among many, but it lacks nothing, as I have instructed you above. For the prophets received from the spirit of Christ, but Christ was not diminished in anything.¹²¹

9. Ten discourses, I have written to you, my beloved, on what you have asked me, I have explained to you without you. (Also) that which you have not sought from me I have

121 He had already expressed this in Dem. VI:15.

given to you. I have asked your name and I have written to you. I have asked to myself your question and I have replied to you as that which I can for your knowledge. These things that which I wrote to you, meditate on them at all times and labour to read the books which are read in the Church of God. These ten small books which I have written to you take one from another and build up one with another; (so) do not separate them from one another. I have written to you from 'ālap until yōd, one letter after another. Read and learn, you, the brethren, the *bnāy qyāmā* and the members of our faith, those from whom mockery is far off, as I have written to you above. Remember that which I have indicated to you, that I have not brought these discourses up to the end, but (only) so much yet of the whole. These are not enough, but hear these things from me without dispute, and discuss about them with our brethren, who are of the same conviction. Everything that you hear which builds up, accept; everything which builds up other doctrines pull down and utterly destroy. For dispute cannot build up. But I, my beloved, as a stone-cutter have brought along the stones for the building; let the wise master-builders carve them and place them in the building. All those workers who toil in the building will receive a wage from the Lord of the house.

The end of the Demonstration on Pastors

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APHRAHAT DEMONSTRATIONS I

Mar Aphrahat, the first known Father of the Syriac Church is the earliest extensive witness to Syriac speaking Christianity. He belongs to the period in the history of the Syriac Church when it was least hellenized, that is before 400 A. D. The twenty-three Demonstrations, written by him in elegant classical Syriac are one of the earliest surviving literary works of the Syriac Church. This volume contains Demonstrations I-X, which form the first group, mainly dealing with the basic aspects of the Christian life. The Demonstrations are presented according to the order given by Aphrahat. This is the first time the first group of Demonstrations as a whole are published in a single volume in English for the readers of Aphrahat.

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